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Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

C. A. R. CROSLAND

THE FUTURE OF THE LEFT

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C. A. R. Crosland

The Future of the Left

I

NOW that the first tempestuous wave of shouting has died down, we can examine the Labour defeat of 1959 more calmly. As to its basic cause, there is no need to look beyond the obvious and generally accepted explanation. It is exceedingly hard to dislodge a Government which maintains both full employment and stable prices. In 1959 we had full employment in all but a few areas (which alone showed a swing to Labour); and the country had enjoyed the longest period of price stability for twenty years.

But this was not all (though it might well have been enough). The years of Conservative rule also coincided with an exceptionally rapid increase in living standards. Mr. Robert Nield has pointed out that average consumption per head, which scarcely rose from 1945 to 1951, increased by 20 per cent from 1951 to 1959; this was as large an improvement as in the twenty-six years from 1913 to 1939. Moreover increases in the standard of living vary greatly, according to the form they take, in the extent to which they are subjectively felt to be significant. This particular increase assumed a strikingly conspicuous form, being associated on the one hand with the end of rationing, controls, and the official dogma of austerity, and on the other with the first stages of a mass breakthrough into the new world of consumer durables. Thus the consumption-boom of the 1950's created an exceptionally strong sense of growing ease and material prosperity.

Under these circumstances, while Labour leaders might argue with much justification that the Tories had had all the luck, most of them had probably in private conceded the election before it started. The surprise lay not in the final result, but in the apparent though temporary swing towards Labour during the campaign itself. This was not, however, sufficient to disturb the underlying trend.

II

IT IS sometimes said that there is now a world-wide trend to the Right, of which the recent British election was only the inevitable local manifestation. Can such a trend be demonstrated?

The answer depends on the time-span which is being considered. We can easily detect the reversal of the swing to the Left which occurred in the 1930's and culminated in most countries in 1945. Such a reversal began over a decade ago, and was inevitable; for all the pre-war Left-ward pressures on the electorate shifted their direction after the war. In the 1930's, the Great Depression combined with mass unemployment convinced the voters that capitalism evidently could not solve its inner contradictions, and should be replaced by Socialism. It stimulated radicalism and the politics of revolt, and encouraged a general antipathy to big business. Abroad, the main enemy, Fascism, was on the Right. All these factors, and later the war itself, pulled people to the Left. By 1946 the majority of democratic countries (Britain, the U.S.A., France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand) were governed by Left-wing parties or Left-oriented coalitions.

In the subsequent years, however, all these

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influences went into reverse. Post-war full employment appeared to demonstrate that capitalism had solved its inner contradictions. The alleviation of poverty weakened the mood of radical revolt. Inflation replaced unemployment as the main domestic threat; and it came to be associated in the public mind, not with big business, but with Left-wing Governments and the Trade Unions. Abroad, the main enemy now was on the Left: Communism. Above all, the governments of the Left became identified with the high taxation, rationing, controls, austerity and inflation which inevitably characterised the post-war period and in some cases recurred after Korea. All these factors pulled people to the Right; and by 1952 Left-wing parties or coalitions had fallen from governmental power in Britain, the U.S.A., France, Belgium, Denmark, Australia, and New Zealand.

But has this trend been accentuated since? Are we now faced, not merely with a "natural" swing of the pendulum which might be reversed for all manner of reasons, but with a long-term secular trend to the Right? Many people think that we are, and that (to quote Professor D. W. Brogan in January's ENCOUNTER) "in 1959 the prospects of what is now the traditional Left look bleaker than they did in 1919 or 1945. . . ."[1]

Generally, this is because the Left has gained so much of what it sought; the reformed, full-employment, welfare-state "capitalism" of to-day obviously evokes much less antagonism than its predecessor of the 1930's. More particularly, the trend is attributed to certain familiar social and economic changes. The strength of the Left, it is said, is being eroded by the changing age-structure of most Western populations and the relative decline of the traditionally Labour older age-groups; the growing political emancipation of women, who allegedly lean more to the Right than do their mates; the decline of the older basic industries such as coal, railways, and textiles in which Socialist loyalties were always strongest; the housing migration from the solidly working-class slum areas into socially more fluid suburban estates and new towns; the changing character of the labour-force and the decline of the blue-collar relative to the white-collar working class; the cultural effect of the new mass media; and above all the sudden irruption of the upper working class into the world of automobiles, gadgets, and consumer durables.

All these changes, it is said, are weakening the traditional class loyalties of the workers and encouraging the spread of a middle-class psychology; and this is reflected politically in a trend to the Right. As a result "the parties of the Right have been growing in electoral strength and parliamentary support for a whole decade,"[2] and will continue to grow for the foreseeable future.

Election results, however, do not provide wholly conclusive evidence for this view. Left-wing governments or coalitions remained in power throughout the decade in Sweden and Norway. The Left regained power in Denmark in 1953 and in New Zealand in 1957. In Congressional elections, the U.S. Democrats won more seats in 1958 than in 1950 or 1952. On the other hand, Right-wing governments replaced Left-wing governments during the latter part of the decade in Belgium, Holland, and (if the terms have meaning there) Canada, and had no difficulty in maintaining themselves in power almost throughout the decade in Britain, Germany, and Italy.

If we look at the matter in terms of votes, and compare the first post-Korean election with the most recent election in each country, we find that the proportion of votes cast for Left-wing parties[3] increased in Ger-

[1] But has Professor Brogan been out of the country for the last five years? His comments on the Labour Party suggest a prolonged sojourn far, far away.

[2] John Vaizey, "Socialism in the New Europe," *Socialist Commentary*, December 1959. This is a most perceptive article.

[3] Social Democratic Party in Germany, Socialists plus Communists in Austria, Left-wing and Right-wing Socialists plus Communists in Italy, Labour in Norway, Democratic Party in U.S.A., Labour plus dissident Labour in Australia, Labour in New Zealand, Socialists plus Communists in Belgium, Social Democrats plus Communists in Denmark, Labour plus Communists in Holland, Social Democrats plus Communists in Sweden, Liberals plus C.C.F. in Canada, Socialists plus Communists in France.

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many, Austria, Italy, Norway, U.S.A. (Congressional elections), Australia, and New Zealand, and decreased in Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Canada, and France. The evidence is thus not at all clear. Certainly those Right-wing governments which were fortunate enough to preside over the great European boom of the 1950's—in Britain, Germany, and Italy—have easily maintained their position. But in terms of votes the figures show seven countries with a rising, and seven countries with a declining Left-wing vote. In two of the latter, moreover, special factors were operating—the change of régime in France and a long-run swing of the pendulum in Canada; while in Holland and Sweden the Left lost less than 2 per cent of the total vote. This leaves Britain as one of only three countries where, without special explanation, the Left-wing vote has suffered a serious decline.

There is thus no world-wide trend to the Right so strong that it can be used by the Labour Party as an escapist excuse for recent setbacks; on the contrary, the persistent decline in the British Labour vote goes, if anything, against the international trend. Yet the underlying social and economic factors mentioned above are unquestionably operating. One must provisionally conclude that their political effect varies according to the adaptability of the party of the Left—that they handicap not all parties of the Left automatically, but particularly those which (like the British Labour Party) are identified in the public mind with a sectional, traditional, class appeal. There is, indeed, a great deal of impressionistic evidence from the recent election to suggest that this is the case.

The task of the Labour Party, then, seems abundantly clear. First, it should initiate detailed social surveys to elicit the motives for recent voting behaviour. If these show, as in Britain they probably will, that social trends are now operating against it, then the Party should have one overriding aim over the next three years: to adapt itself, without in any way surrendering basic principles, to the realities of social change, and to present itself to the electorate in a mid-20th-century guise.

III

INSTEAD, it is caught up in a confused and irritable debate on nationalisation. An outsider might easily be forgiven for not knowing what this was all about. It appears to revolve mainly around Mr. Hugh Gaitskell's Blackpool speech. But all that Mr. Gaitskell said was this. First, the Labour Party now accepts a mixed economy, and is no longer committed to the complete public ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange. Secondly, to the extent that the Party still wishes to enlarge the public sector, it should normally do so not by the creation of more and more state monopolies, but by other and more flexible forms of social ownership.

But were not both these propositions accepted years ago? "It is clear to the serious student of modern politics," wrote Mr. Aneurin Bevan in 1952,[4]

> that a mixed economy is what most people of the West would prefer. The victory of Socialism need not be universal to be decisive. I have no patience with those Socialists, so-called, who in practice would socialise nothing, while in theory they threaten the whole of private property. They are purists and therefore barren. It is neither prudent, nor does it accord with our conception of the future, that all forms of private property should live under perpetual threat. In almost all types of human society, different forms of property have lived side by side. . . . Where the frontier between the public and private sector should be fixed, is a question that will be answered differently in different nations.

The Labour Party itself, in *Labour and the New Society* (described as "a statement of the policy and principles of British democratic Socialism"), officially declared in 1950 that "private enterprise has a proper place in the economy." The Socialist International, in its famous Frankfurt declaration of 1952, stated that Socialist planning "does not presuppose public ownership of all the means of production. . . . [It] is compatible with the existence of private ownership in important fields." Almost every major social-democratic party in the world has now committed itself to accepting a mixed economy.

[4] *In Place of Fear* (Heinemann, 1952), pp. 118–119.

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Similarly, even those on the traditionalist Left had conceded that public ownership, so far from being the essence of Socialism, was only a means to an end. "For [the early Socialists]," wrote Mrs. Barbara Castle, Mr. Richard Crossman, and Mr. Ian Mikardo in 1950,[5]

> the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange was the sole criterion of whether a community was a capitalist or a socialist one. They identified socialism with public ownership. . . . In the last few years we have come to distinguish the means of Socialism from its ends. . . . We are now less concerned about who owns a factory.

Nor was this a startling new doctrine. R. H. Tawney, lecturing to the Fabians in 1944, had already declared[6] that the transfer of economic sovereignty

> does not necessarily mean indiscriminate nationalisation, which is merely one method, though an important method, of achieving that result. . . . The truth is, of course, that the transference of property to public hands is a means, not an end.

As for the method of transfer, it was also accepted, long before Mr. Douglas Jay's notorious *Forward* article, that the emphasis should not now be on the state monopoly. "Nationalisation should be used much more *flexibly* than in the past," wrote Mrs. Castle, Mr. Crossman, and Mr. Mikardo in the same 1950 pamphlet

> The next steps are not so obvious or so simple. We are approaching the end of the natural monopolies, and we can therefore move beyond the technique of nationalising whole industries one at a time by one Act at a time. This technique . . . has severe disadvantages.

Similar statements, and references to the need for newer forms of social ownership, can be found over and over again in official documents of the T.U.C., the Co-operative Movement, and the Labour Party itself.[7]

Then what is all the furore about? One would have hoped now for a calm discussion, in the light of the public's manifestly clear views on future nationalisation, of exactly how far it should be carried, exactly what forms it should take, and exactly how it should be presented to the public. No doubt some heat would have been engendered even then, as people argued about where the frontier should be drawn. But the present tumult and shouting, although confined to a militant minority, goes far beyond this, and needs some special explanation.

It is to be explained, first, by the paradox that Mr. Gaitskell's speech came as a great surprise to many of the rank-and-file, who had not grasped what the leadership had been saying for the past ten years. This was partly because the leadership, both Left and Right, tended to speak with two voices—one for the electors and another for the Party militants; it never, for example, sought to amend the Party constitution with its apparent commitment to 100 per cent public ownership. The Left-wing leaders, especially, were schizophrenic on the subject of nationalisation; intellectually they accepted a mixed economy, emotionally they still clung to the dogma of wholesale public ownership. The result was a series of very confused noises.

Consequently, although successive election manifestos faithfully reflected the growing moderation of the leadership, some Party activists continued to believe, and Mr. Colin Hurry and the Institute of Directors purported to believe, that Labour was still committed to the long-term goal of total public ownership. As with the pre-Hitler German Social Democrats, the extremist phraseology of the Party's formal aims bore no relation to the moderate, practical content of its short-term programme. And as with the German Social Democrats, the blurred image and the confusion which resulted did nothing but harm (except psychologically to the militants, who could still retain, whatever practical concessions they had to make to-day, the expectation of a millennial triumph in the future). It was this confusion which Mr. Gaitskell sought to dissipate by his Blackpool speech. But the revelation of what the leadership actually thought came as a fearful shock to those militants who still interpreted the

[5] *Keeping Left* (*New Statesman* pamphlet, 1950), pp. 27–28.
[6] Reprinted in *The Attack* (Allen and Unwin, 1953), pp. 92, 98.
[7] Cf. *Public Ownership: an Interim Report* (T.U.C., 1953), *Social Ownership* (Co-operative Union, 1953), and *Industry and Society* (Labour Party, 1957).

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Party's formal constitution to mean 100 per cent public ownership.

Further hostility was aroused by the feeling that the "revisionists" were proposing a cynical surrender of principle for the sake of electoral advantage. In fact a political party is not behaving immorally in studying the wishes of the voters, provided that it wants power not for reasons of personal ambition or prestige, but in order to put a programme into effect. Indeed the traditionalist Left has often advocated its policies precisely on electoral grounds. There is much talk (though rather more in Chelsea and Oxford than in Stepney or Nyasaland) of the dangers of sacrificing principle; what is forgotten is the sacrifice of Socialist objectives, not to mention human freedom and welfare, involved in a long period of impotent opposition. In any event, there is a profound difference between short-run attempts at vote-catching in the next election, and a long-run attempt to adapt the Party's attitudes in the light of wholly changed conditions. Revisionism, which after all was being preached in Britain long before the last election, is a long-term effort to enable the Labour Party to survive in mid-20th-century conditions.

It is, nevertheless, certain to be resented, for natural psychological reasons. The older party stalwart, brought up in the inter-war years to equate Socialism with the nationalisation of the means of production, feels lost and bewildered if deprived of this familiar mental sheet-anchor. The dogma of nationalisation informed and symbolised his early years of struggle; if he is asked to give it up, he feels that he is being asked to say that his whole political life, to which he sacrificed so much, was pointless and wasted. This feeling is wrong but natural. Again, some middle-class Socialists, to whom (as to converts in other fields) militancy and attachment to dogma are psychologically necessary, react to any suggestion of heterodoxy in a highly emotional and over-determined manner. Revisionism destroys the simplicity, the certainty, and the unquestioning conviction that come from having clear-cut crusading objectives to fight for, and a hated, easily-identified enemy to fight against. It makes everything complicated and ambiguous; it is an explicit admission that many of the old dreams are either realised or dead. No wonder it is resented—especially in the moment of defeat. Some of the more recent revisionists might have displayed a greater understanding of these inevitable human reactions.

Anti-revisionism is fortified in Britain by two special factors. The first is the dogged persistence of an underlying class antagonism. To the militant minority of British workers, much more than to German or Scandinavian or American workers, the employer is still, even if only subconsciously, "the class enemy"; and nationalisation, much more than high taxation or government controls or the strength of the Unions, symbolises the determination to defeat or extirpate him. To suggest that it is no longer the ultimate aim seems, to the militant worker, simply a betrayal of the class struggle; and matters are not improved when at the same time middle-class revisionists, by cavilling at the allegedly harmful working-class "image" of the Party, appear also to threaten his own social status and the validity of his instinctive class loyalties.

The other special factor is the extreme conservatism, common, alas, to most elements in British life, of the British working-class movement. The resistance to change (as I also found when trying to propagate radical reforms inside the Co-operative Movement) is sometimes stupendous. It is surely depressing, and would be true of no other country in the world, that a proposal to re-write a forty-year-old constitution should arouse such acute suspicion and resentment, even amongst some who like to think of themselves as radical. Traditionalism in Britain is no monopoly of the Right.

These are some of the reasons why Mr. Gaitskell, saying at Blackpool nothing more than Eduard Bernstein had said sixty years ago, found so many angry Kautskys in his audience. It was a curious irony; for, in the days of the original Revisionist controversy, Bernstein, suspected of having been seduced by the non-doctrinal anti-Marxist approach

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of the early Fabians, was accused by his traditionalist opponents of seeing the world "through English glasses."

> You have decided to be an Englishman—take the consequences and become an Englishman [Karl Kautsky wrote to him in 1898]. The development which you have undergone . . . heads away from German Social Democracy, although not from Socialism. Try to achieve a place in the English movement and to become a representative of English Socialism.

The wheel has turned full circle. Bernstein, were he alive to-day, would come under heavier fire in the British than in the German Socialist Movement;[8] for the former, from being the most flexible and empirical, has become (at least if we were to judge by the vocal minority) the most conservative and fundamentalist in the world.

IV

THE most rational criticism of the "new" doctrine is as follows. Mr. Gaitskell, declaring at Blackpool that nationalisation was only a means and not a "Socialist first principle," attempted (correctly) to define Socialism in terms of certain social and ethical values. This attempt is criticised, generally on the grounds that many Liberals or "Bow-Group" Tories might assent to some of these ideals, and specifically on the grounds that to relegate nationalisation to a lower status is to destroy the most fundamental distinction between Socialists and their opponents.

The latter criticism, even if correct, seems rather belated. It implies that before the Blackpool speech the Labour Party was accustomed to making public ownership the primary issue at elections. The facts are quite otherwise. *Britain Belongs to You*, the Labour manifesto in the 1959 election, devoted only 18 out of 440 lines to proposals for further public ownership. *Forward with Labour*, the 1955 manifesto, devoted 6 out of 393 lines, *Challenge to Britain* (in 1953) 52 out of 370 lines of summary of conclusions. *Let Us Win Through Together* (in 1950) 42 out of 519 lines. Lest it be thought that these low proportions reflected only the reactionary views of the Right-wing leadership, one may add that *Keeping Left* in 1950 contained no list of large industries to be taken over, barely mentioned a single industry by name, and devoted exactly 5 out of 114 lines of "Conclusions" to the entire subject of nationalisation.

It is perfectly well known to anyone in touch with affairs that for many years past the Labour Party has not fought elections primarily on the issue of nationalisation. It has fought them rather on housing, education, social services, planning, the distribution of income, and foreign and colonial policy; and it has found no difficulty whatever in differentiating itself from the Conservatives.

However, it might still be objected (though most unplausibly) that these are only short-term issues of immediate popular concern. A Socialist party also needs to have clearly distinctive long-term aims; and the aims expressed by Mr. Gaitskell do not fulfil this condition since some of them would be acceptable to progressive opinion in other parties.

This criticism shows some forgetfulness of history. It has always been the case that an idealistic or forward-looking minority of non-Socialists has sympathised with, and even sought to further, some of the aims of the Socialist or militant working-class movement. Many Tories (for example, Shaftesbury and Oastler) agreed with the Chartist critique of *laisser-faire*. Later, radical social reformers such as Charles Dilke and Lloyd George helped to pioneer the Welfare State. Many Socialist ideas on foreign and colonial policy are derived from Liberal critics of imperialism and power politics such as Gladstone and Morley. And non-Socialist intellectuals could always be found, from Newman to Hilaire Belloc on one side, from Carlyle to Ruskin and Oscar Wilde on another, who shared some Socialist aspirations. It would thus hardly be a unique phenomenon if to-day a minority of radical Liberals and Tories sympathised with some of Labour's long-term aims.

Indeed, some past definitions of Socialism, unlike Mr. Gaitskell's, have been so vague

[8] See F. R. Allemann's "Farewell to Marx," in this number of ENCOUNTER, p. 67.

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that almost anyone could have accepted them *in toto*. Who, for example, could decently reject Socialism if it consisted, as Sidney Webb maintained, of "the economic side of the democratic ideal"? Or if, as Shaw asserted in *Everybody's Political What's What*, "Socialism is . . . the economist's hatred of waste and disorder, the æsthete's hatred of ugliness and dirt, the lawyer's hatred of injustice, the saint's hatred of the seven deadly sins"? The same is true of many of the ethical formulations of Socialism, Keir Hardie, for example, wrote of Socialism as being "a form of social economy very closely akin to the principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount"; while Bruce Glasier, whose militancy was never in doubt, wrote that

> Socialism is religion—that part of it that concerns the right state of our present lives, the right state of our relations to our fellows, the right moral health of our souls. Yet it may be better simply to say with William Morris that Socialism is fellowship.

Such quotations, despite the distinction of their authors, can no doubt be dismissed as being altogether too vague. But the fact remains that even more explicit formulations of Socialist aims have always elicited *some* sympathy from *some* non-Socialists. Indeed this must be the case. Socialism denotes a belief in the pre-eminence of certain values, such as equality or co-operation or collective welfare or internationalism. But such values are not absolute. They cannot be held rigidly and uncompromisingly, any more than can the opposite conservative values of hierarchy or competition or individualism or patriotism. No normal Socialist is completely and exclusively an egalitarian, denying all validity to all arguments for inequality; no normal Conservative is completely and exclusively an individualist, denying all validity to all arguments for collective action. The beliefs of each of us are a compound, in proportions which vary along a spectrum from extreme Left to extreme Right, of opposing sets of principles; and we are labelled Socialist or Conservative according to which set predominates.

A Socialist, then, will seldom totally repudiate the theoretical validity of *all* Conservative principles, or *vice versa*; but each will rate the other's values much lower than his own, and hence will choose and act quite differently in any given situation. It follows, however, and indeed is evident from the historical examples quoted above, that there must inevitably be *some* common ground between a statement of Socialist and one of progressive Conservative beliefs.

The area of common ground, moreover, is likely to be greater to-day than in the past. Opposing values are held in a more uncompromising form, the more sharply society is divided into antagonistic social classes. A Marxist-type class struggle polarises not only persons, but also personal beliefs; and everyone takes up the most extreme ideological position.

But of course class-conflict is not of this character in Britain to-day. The lines of class-division are certainly more sharply etched than in many other countries; but they are more blurred than they were a century ago. Outbursts of class resentment still occur; but they no longer take the same prolonged, embittered form. Economic prosperity and social security have softened the acerbities of political conflict. Under the impact of democratic pressure and a changing climate of opinion, Conservatives have come to accept a large measure of liberal reform; and much of what the Left preached forty years ago is now non-controversial. Under these circumstances, the militant language of class-war, the terminology of revolt and counter-revolt, is (slowly) passing out of usage. It would surely be incredible, in this more humane society, if all the items in a formulation of Socialist objectives aroused the total hostility of every Liberal or progressive Tory. Most people would judge it a thoroughly good thing that they do not.

But it does not follow that because politics are now less bitter, therefore they are wholly drained of content: or because fisticuffs are now less common, therefore there is nothing left to fight about. The average Conservative (who is after all what matters), though he no longer harks back to mid-Victorian capitalism, still does not want the same sort of society as a Socialist does. He still gives an

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overwhelmingly high priority to his Right-wing principles; and he still has excellent reasons for wanting to see a Conservative Government returned. It is thus absurd to say that a moderate statement of Socialist aims, such as Mr. Gaitskell made at Blackpool, removes all fundamental differences between Left and Right: or that "there is nothing left of Socialism" because nationalisation is demoted to a lower status. We need only consider some of the formulated aims to see how unlikely it is that the average Conservative would accept their implications.

V

First, the emphasis on social welfare. No one supposes that the Conservatives will suddenly dismantle the Welfare State, or utterly neglect the claims of the socially under-privileged groups. But equally one can hardly deny that a deep difference exists between the two parties about the priority to be accorded to social welfare. This is not because Conservatives are necessarily less humanitarian, but because they hold particular views as to the proper rôle of the State, the desirable level of taxation, and the importance of private as opposed to collective responsibility. Their willingness for social expenditure is circumscribed by these views; and the consequence is a quite different order of priorities.

Secondly, the aim of "an equitable distribution of wealth," related not to the accidents of birth but to individual effort and ability. This might sound an innocuous principle, to which anyone could say amen. In fact it has, in Britain, the most radical implications. This is because inherited property is an exceptionally important influence in Britain on the distribution of wealth. The application of this apparently non-controversial principle would therefore require a determined attack on large-scale inheritance. This a Conservative, though he is willing somewhat to mitigate existing inequalities, cannot countenance; for it offends against his views of the rôle of the family, the proper level of taxation, the rights of property, the need for large personal savings, and the importance of tradition and continuity in our national life. And quite apart from inheritance, there are, and always will be, deep differences between Right and Left as to what constitutes a desirable distribution of wealth.

Thirdly, the ideal of the "classless society." I do not discuss here what meaning can properly be attached to this concept, as I have done so at length elsewhere.[9] It suffices to say that Britain could be made a great deal more "classless" than it is to-day, but that this would entail a major reform of the private sector of education (and notably of the "public" schools). This again most Conservatives would not countenance; for it would offend against their beliefs about the rights of the moneyed individual, the importance of social hierarchy, and the value of a national élite. Generally, it seems absurd to maintain that most Conservatives favour the same pattern of class-relations as most Socialists.

Fourthly, "the fundamental equality of all races and all peoples." This is no doubt an ambiguous phrase, to which some (though by no means all) Conservatives might pay lip-service. But anyone who thinks there is no reality behind it, and that debates about Suez and Nyasaland reflect only day-to-day tactical disagreements and not profound differences of feeling and principle, must be living in a rather remote world. A belief in racial equality and the rule of law runs deep in the blood of active Socialists (though not of all their working-class supporters). The typical Conservative, by contrast, if he holds such beliefs at all, will constantly subordinate them to deeply-felt emotions about national prestige or the British Empire or the rights of white settlers.

Fifthly, there are contrasting views, though they were not very clearly expressed in Mr. Gaitskell's speech, about the proper dividing-line between the public and private spheres of responsibility. This difference, which runs like a thread through much of our political debate, manifests itself in innumerable ways —over the proportion of the national income to be devoted to communal services, over the

[9] *The Future of Socialism* (1956), Ch. VIII.

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AFTER WRITING THIS ARTICLE, *I attended an international Socialist conference in Holland. One thing became even clearer to me there: a spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Revisionism. Mr. Gaitskell is not alone.*

Nearly all the European Socialist parties are now revising, or have already revised, their basic programmes in the light of recent social and economic changes. Especially, they are defining Socialism increasingly in terms other than the public ownership of all the means of production; they explicitly accept a mixed economy and a private sector; and they treat nationalisation as being merely one possible means to certain ends under appropriate circumstances.

The Dutch Labour Party, for example, in its new policy programme adopted last November, defines Socialism in terms of a set of social and ethical values. Specifically rejecting "State Socialism and the bureaucratic assumption of power," it declares that "ownership of the means of production should be made subservient to the well-being of the nation. . . . It is desirable for different forms of publicly-owned and privately-owned production to exist side by side. . . . . Public control must be exercised over the privately-owned undertakings IF THIS SHOULD PROVE TO BE NECESSARY *in the interests of the community. Socialisation of the most important means of production will be necessary* IF THIS COURSE PROVES TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY *of maintaining full employment, curbing excessive economic power, or achieving efficient operation."* (My emphasis.)

The Swedish Social Democratic Party is now engaged on revising its statement of principles, which dates from 1944; a programme commission headed by the Prime Minister, Tage Erlander, has prepared a new draft for submission to the Party Conference in June. In the words of this draft, "Social democracy supports the demand for public ownership OR PUBLIC CONTROL . . . TO THE EXTENT THAT THIS IS NECESSARY *in order to safeguard important public interests. [It] wants to stimulate private enterprise in those provinces where it shows that it can combine efficiency and progressive thought with responsibility towards consumers, employees, and the community."* (My emphasis.)

The Swiss Social Democratic Party, in its new programme adopted at Winterthur in June, 1959, declares that "in the case of monopolistic enterprises we must EITHER *establish the conditions necessary for fair competition* OR *place them under public control* OR *actually transfer them to public ownership."*

Even the Austrian Socialist Party, traditionally the most Marxist in Europe (though now counting among its leaders the revisionist son of the anti-revisionist Karl Kautsky), has drastically revised its programme. In its New Programme (adopted at Vienna in May 1958) it states that "the aim of Socialists is an order of society which has as its objective the free development of the human personality; their aim is the abolition of classes and a fair distribution of the social product." To achieve this aim the community must "acquire full control over the essential factors of production; but this does not exclude wide scope for private initiative, competition, and the price mechanism." On the question of ownership it declares that "the only test as to which undertakings are to be taken into public ownership will be the public interest. Public ownership will arise mainly in the case of those large undertakings whose power constitutes a threat to the economic and political interests of the community. Small and medium-sized undertakings will not be socialised in any circumstances. In view of [their] prevalence in the Austrian economy, large sectors will, even in the future, remain reserved for private enterprise."

The German Social Democratic Party has perhaps moved furthest away from traditional dogma. Its new Basic Programme, adopted at Bad Godesberg last November, accepts categorically the doctrine of the diminished importance of ownership. "Private ownership of the means of production is no longer identical with the control of power. Economic power, rather than ownership, is the central problem to-day. . . . The most important means [of preventing the abuse of economic power] are investment control and control over the forces dominating the market." On ownership: "Private ownership of the means of production can claim protection by society as long as it does not hinder the establishment of social justice. . . . Where sound economic power relations CANNOT BE GUARANTEED BY OTHER MEANS, *public ownership is appropriate and necessary."* (My emphasis.)

The infection has also spread outside Europe. The Labour Parties in Australia and New Zealand are now completely empirical about public ownership; the C.P.F. in Canada is committed to a mixed economy.

Ironically, the French Socialist Party, almost alone, retains in its Constitution an explicit commitment to the class struggle and the nationalisation of all the means of production. Perhaps there is a moral here.

No doubt it is usually pointless to urge the example of continental Europe on the insular British. But at least to the internationalists on the British Left, the example may bring some comfort. They can rest assured that the Labour Party, in trying to revise its forty-year-old constitution, is marching in step with the internation Socialist movement—though a bit to the rear of the column.—C. A. R. C.

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division between private and public capital expenditure, and increasingly in the field of what is loosely called town and country planning. This latter subject may well become the dominant domestic issue of the 1960's. We are gradually waking up to the fact that both our cities and our countryside are horribly threatened—by the growth of traffic, by speculative metropolitan office-building, by the steady encroachment of suburban housing on the countryside, and æsthetically by the low architectural standard of most new building. Whether we stave off the threat, or succumb to it, will depend on how far the country is willing to sacrifice private interests and unregulated liberty to social control and Government initiative. There will be only too much to divide the Socialist from the Conservative in this field.

But at this point Socialists must beware. They may justly attack the vulgar bias towards unregulated private interest which is one of the characteristics of our prosperous society. They must not, however, attack this society root and branch. Simply to dismiss it as "evil" and "rotten," as some Left-wing speakers did at Blackpool, is not only electorally imbecile; it betrays an arrogant indifference, possible only amongst bourgeois Chelsea *literati*, to the lives and fears and hopes of ordinary people.

Surprisingly enough, ordinary people like to be materially well-off. And any normal Socialist will wholeheartedly rejoice at the spread of material affluence—on grounds of personal freedom, since rising standards widen the area of choice and opportunity: on grounds of social justice, which surely requires that the masses should now also be admitted to the world of material ease which others have so long enjoyed: on general egalitarian grounds, since rising consumption increases both the fact and consciousness of social equality: and on grounds of democratic anti-paternalism, since this is clearly what the workers want. And anyone who tells them they are wrong, and that they are simply becoming vulgarised or Americanised, will rightly be given short shrift. Generally, people enjoying an above-average standard of living should be chary of admonishing the masses on the perils of material wealth.

A Socialist should never be distinguished as one who thus admonishes. He should, however, certainly be distinguished as one who deplores the present division between public and private spending, the present balance between public interest and pursuit of private profit, and generally the cultural values presently being disseminated by commercial television and the Beaverbrook press. On this last point, some Labour politicians are perhaps open to criticism; no doubt from a laudable desire to dissociate themselves from the doctrines both of puritanism and the class-war, they are in danger of adjusting rather too completely to the social and cultural values ruling to-day.

One could list still other major Left-Right issues: aid to the under-developed areas, protection of the consumer against large-scale producing interests, the achievement (still far away) of real equality of educational opportunity, the degree of planning, and the liberty of the subject—in addition, of course, to the rôle of public ownership. But it is surely already obvious that Mr. Gaitskell, when he defined Socialism in terms other than the nationalisation of all the means of production, did not somehow spirit away all differences between Socialists and their opponents. These differences are, happily, mitigated as compared with half-a-century ago; and one should not exaggerate them merely to stage a mock political battle or create a Parliamentary fracas. But no one who examines the real implications of Mr. Gaitskell's formulation, or even sits through an average sample of Parliamentary debates, could possibly suppose that nothing except public ownership divides the two political parties.

If British Socialism succeeds in adapting itself and its doctrines to the mid-20th century, it will still find plenty of genuine battles left to fight. Besides, it might even get back into power, and have a chance to win them.

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Reynolds Price

One Sunday in Late July

JUST with his body and from inside like a snake, leaning that black motor-cycle side to side, cutting in and out of the slow line of cars to get there first, staring due north through goggles towards Mount Moriah and switching those coon tails in everybody's face was Wesley Beavers, and laid against his back like sleep, spraddle-legged on the sheepskin seat behind him was Rosacoke Mustian, who was maybe his girl and who had given up looking into the wind and trying to nod at every sad car in the line, and when he even speeded up and passed the truck (lent for the afternoon by Mr. Isaac Alston and hauling nothing but one pine box and one black boy in a straight chair, dressed in all he could borrow, with his foot on the box to steady it)—when he even passed that, she said once into his back "Don't" and rested in humiliation, not thinking but with her hands on his hips for dear life and her white blouse blown out behind her like a banner in defeat.

It was because Wesley was a motor-cycle man since his discharge (or would be on Monday) and wouldn't have brought her in a car if fire had fallen in balls on every side. He had intended taking her to the picnic that way, and when Mildred Sutton died having a baby without a husband and Rosacoke felt compelled to go to the funeral first and asked Wesley please to take her, he said he would but he saw no reason to change to a car for a Negro funeral. Rosacoke had to get there and couldn't walk three miles in dust and couldn't risk him going on ahead, so she didn't argue but just pulled her skirt up over her knees for all to see and put her hat in the saddle bag and climbed on.

Riding like that she didn't see the land they passed through—nothing new or strange but what she had passed through every day of her life almost, except for the very beginning and some summer days when she would leave for 4-H camp at White Lake or to stay with Aunt Oma in Newport News or to set with somebody in the hospital, like Papa before he died. But the land was there, waiting.

The road passed a little way from the Mustians' porch, and if you came up their driveway and turned left, you would be at the paving soon, and that took you on to Warrenton where she worked. But they turned right to-day and the road narrowed as it went till it was only wide enough for one thing going one way—a car or a truck or a mule and wagon—and it being July, whatever passed, even the smallest foot, ground more dirt to dust that rose several times every hour of the day and occasionally—invisibly—at night and lingered awhile and in the long light at sunset hung like fog and, if there was no breeze, settled back on whatever was there to receive it—Rosacoke and Mama and Rato and Milo walking to church, if it had been a fourth Sunday and ten years ago before Milo got his driving licence—but settling mostly on Negro children aiming home in a slow line carrying blackberries they had picked to eat (and if you stopped and asked, "How much you asking for your berries?" they would be so surprised and shy and forget the price their mother told them to say if anybody stopped, and hand them over, bucket and all, for whatever you wanted to give, and all the dust you raised would be on those berries when you got home). It settled on the leaves too—on dogwood and hickory and thin pine and now and then an oak and on Mr. Isaac Alston's cherry trees that huddled around the pond he had made for the hot air to pass over, choked and tan till there would come a rain—trees he had set out as switches twelve years ago on his seventieth birthday and poured fish in the water smaller than the eye could see and

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claimed he would live to sit in that cool cherry shade and pull out the dim descendants of those first minnows. And he would, as the Alstons didn't die under ninety.

What Alstons *had* died were the things they came to next—the recent ones, overflowed from the family graves and laid out on this side of Delight Baptist Church, looking shorter than anybody would have guessed, with people around them that never had family graves to begin with—Rosacoke's Papa (who by the time he died had completely forgotten Miss Pauline his wife and asked to be buried beside his mother and then forgot to tell them where his mother was) and Miss Pauline, the size of a dressed rabbit, and Rosacoke's own Daddy who was no Baptist (who wasn't much of anything) and whose grave had sunk into the ground. The graves went towards the church, taking grass with them, and then the white sand began that had been hauled in from a creek bed. The church stood in the sand under two oak trees, wooden and white and square as a gunshell box, daring people not to come. The Mustians went and even Wesley Beavers, with *his* name.

But it wasn't where they were going now so they passed by, and the graves and Delight Church and the sand and the two long picnic tables turned to the woods that Milo and Rosacoke and Rato had run in as children with Mildred Sutton and any other Negroes she brought along (that had vanished now to Baltimore, mostly). The woods began by the road and went back further than Rosacoke or even the boys had ever gone, not because they were afraid but because they got tired—the woods went on that long, and every leaf of them belonged to Mr. Isaac Alston. Once Rosacoke and Mildred packed them a dinner and said to themselves, "We will walk till we come to an open field where somebody is growing something." So they walked on slowly in a straight line through the cool damp air under trees where the sun never came but only this green light the mushrooms grew by. When they had walked an hour, they were breathing in air that nothing but possums and owls had breathed before, and snakes if snakes breathed. Mildred didn't like the idea but Rosacoke kept going, and Mildred came on behind, looking mostly *up*, checking on the sky to still be there and to see what snakes were studying down on them. Then they came to an open field the size of a circus ring where there were no trees but only bitter old briars and broomstraw the colour of Milo's beard that was just then arriving. They sat down on the edge of that to eat their biscuits and syrup and for Mildred to rest her feet, but Rosacoke thought and decided they couldn't stop here as it wasn't a field where anybody had *meant* to grow anything. So they stood up to go, and Mildred's mouth fell open and said, "Great God A-mighty" because there was one deer behind them in the trees for quicker than it took to say if it had horns. But its eyes were black and it had looked at them. When its last sound had gone, Rosacoke said, "Don't let's go no farther," and Mildred said, "All right." They weren't afraid of any deer, but if those woods offered things like that, that would take the time to look at you, when you had only walked an hour, where *would* they end, and what would be growing in any field they found on the other side, and who would be tending it there? So they came out, taking their time, proving they hadn't given up for fear, and when they got to the road, Mildred spoke for the first time since calling on God to see that deer—"Rosacoke, it's time for me some supper"—and they parted. It was no more time for supper than it was for snow, but Mildred meant to get home quick and unload that deer on somebody—his streak he made through the trees and the sound of his horn feet in the old leaves and his eyes staring on through all those biscuits at what they did, and waiting.

If Rosacoke had looked up from Wesley's back at the woods, she might have remembered that day and how it was only nine years ago and here she was headed to bury that same Mildred, and was that black-eyed deer still waiting, and did *he* belong to Mr. Isaac?—that deer? But she didn't look up and she didn't remember. If you were with Wesley, what good was remembering? You couldn't tell him what you remembered. He said he lived in the present, and that meant maybe that when he went a hundred and forty miles from home to spend three years in the U.S. Navy, sitting around in a tight uniform fixing radios and not moving a step out of Norfolk, Virginia (or so he said) except to come home for a few week-ends, maybe he seldom thought of her? Not the way she thought of him anyhow—wondering every night if she was his, hoping she was, even when he didn't write for weeks—and then sent sassy postcards. But he had been home a civilian these three days, and to-morrow he was headed back to Norfolk to sell motor-cycles with a

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friend of his, and she didn't know a thing she hadn't known for years—which was that he still came to get her Saturday night and took her to a place called Danceland and danced with every woman there in succession so fast he seemed to be ten Wesleys, or a dozen, swarming, and then rode her home and kissed her goodnight for an hour, without a question or a word.

She thought that through once. It was the deepest thinking she could do on a motor-cycle with dust running up her legs, and she was just changing to something new—that at last Wesley had found the vehicle he was meant for (being with Wesley had always been like being on a motor-cycle)—when she felt the shift of his shoulders under her cheek and his hips under her hands. The way he moved she slackened her grip for a second—it was too much like trying to hold your eye through the lid while it turns, smooth in the socket but easy to ruin.

She looked up and they were at Mount Moriah Church where they meant to be, and Wesley was turning in, not slowing up at all, but gouging a great rut in the dusty yard. He stuck out a leg and his black ankle boots ploughed a little way, and that halted them under the one low tree. The coon tails relaxed but Wesley kept the motor going, racing it with twitches of his hand, listening like he expected it to speak, till Rosacoke said in his ear, "Hush your noise, Wesley."

"Don't it sound funny to you?"

"No," she said. So he let the motor die, and in the astonished quiet where every bird had surrendered to Wesley's roar, the only sound was that truck and the cars coming on behind, rumbling like distant buffaloes, with Mildred. "Get down, Wesley. They'll all be here in a minute." Wesley swung off the seat and watched while Rosacoke got herself down. Now they were still, the heat settled back on them, and they both shook their heads under the burden. But they didn't speak. They had given up talking about it long ago. Rosacoke took out her handkerchief and wiped her face before the sweat could streak the dust. She looked in the round mirror on the handlebars and combed out her hair that had the wind in it still after the ride. With the black tree behind her, you could see the dust fly up around her head from out of her hair, and in the round mirror, it outlined her with a sudden halo. Even Wesley noticed that. Then she put on her hat and said, "We didn't need to come *that* quick," and took off towards the church, sinking through the thin crust of the ground with her high heels. When she had walked ten yards alone and her white shoes were tan, she turned and said, "*Come* on, Wesley. Let's don't be standing around staring when they get here."

"Well, I'm going to work on this motor a little bit to make sure we can get out when we want to. I'll be in there in a little while. You just save me a seat by the window."

She only blushed—all she ever did now when Wesley let her down (which pretty nearly kept her blushing non-stop) and said, "Don't go playing that harp" (the harmonica was another thing he had taken up in the Navy) and climbed the steps. She stopped at the top and looked back towards the road. That way, Wesley saw her and thought how far she had come in three years to being this—tall almost as he was, maybe five-foot-nine, and her skin pale as candles laid on her long bones just as close, and what wind there was, twitching at her hair pulled to the back of her neck and falling down long and dry and the colour of straw from under her level hat, stopping below her shoulders where your hand would have been if you had been holding her and dancing with her, close (the only way Wesley danced since his discharge). Then his eyes moved on. And every time he passed below her swinging hair —looking—he got on to women he knew in Norfolk or at the beach and how they smelled, twisting in the dark, and how their smell stayed on him now he didn't recollect their names or how they looked though he had laboured in them whole nights of his life, and the feel of them was on his fingers like oil, real as if they were by him now under that tree, calling him Junior with their hands working and him starting and them crying "Sweet Jesus!" to him in the night.

But suddenly a bird sang in the tree over Wesley's head, holding up its one clear voice like a deed in the scorching day, and Rosacoke looked at Wesley like he might have done it—that song—looking clear through him and everything he thought, it seemed, shaking her head at what she saw. But Wesley was twenty-two years old his last birthday, and what was so wrong, he wanted to know, with him thinking all those things?—except maybe they didn't fit Rosacoke, not the way she was now, new and changed since the times three years ago when they would go to the show in Warrenton and drive nearly home and stop and spend an hour

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or longer telling each other good-night with the windows misted up, sitting under a tree with acorns falling on to the car to make them laugh. Those other women, he had touched and claimed whenever he needed to, but how much of Rosacoke had he touched? Knowing her all that time, how much of her could he see whenever his eyes were closed? How much of her could he claim?—her standing on church steps in Sunday white, straining to see where Mildred was—how much of that could he just walk up and ask for and get?

He might have tried to find out if she hadn't turned and vanished in the dark church, not meaning to roll her hips but letting loose all the power she had there (which was enough to grind rocks) and showing, last thing, her white ankles flexing firm on her heels, and Jesus, he was back in Norfolk sure as the sun poured down. And it did—all over Wesley Beavers from head to foot—which was half the trouble. So to change the subject he took out his cycle tools and tightened screws that were tighter already than God ever meant them to be.

ROSACOKE remembered when she was in the vestibule that she hadn't been here since the day she slipped off and came with Mildred to the meeting where Aunt Pink Somerville took it in her head to stand up at age eighty and announce who the fathers of all her children were as far as she could recall. Rosacoke looked around now and the same three things to notice were there—a bell rope hanging from the steeple for anybody to pull, and a grey paper hornets' nest that was built in the window by mistake during the war but was deserted now far as the eye could see, though nobody would take it down for fear one old hornet might be in there still, getting older and meaner, and by the open door to the auditorium, a paper bag nailed to the wall with a note saying *Kindly Leave Gum Here*. Rosacoke took one deep breath—like it was the last she would get all afternoon—and went in, and the hot air came out to meet her like a member.

It looked empty—just a choir at the back around a piano and a pulpit in front of that and on the side a stove and then hard seats enough for a hundred people though everybody knew Mount Moriah would hold a hundred and fifty and upwards for anything special like a funeral, but it didn't look like anybody was planning a funeral to-day. There wasn't a flower in sight—they were coming with Mildred in the truck—and nobody had thought to come ahead and open the windows. There were six long windows and Rosacoke picked the back one on the left to open and sit by. She went towards it up the bare aisle, and when she got to the pew, the church wasn't empty at all—there was Landon Allgood laid out asleep, the size of a dry corn stalk, breathing heavy, one arm hanging off the bench to the floor, and his shirt buttoned right to the neck. He lived alone in a one-room house a little beyond the church, and his trouble was, he took paregoric when he could get it which was mostly on Saturdays, and then he seldom made it home. You were liable to find him anywhere on Sunday morning asleep. One Christmas before Rosacoke was born, he fell down in the public road, and whoever found him next morning had to carry him to Rocky Mount Hospital and have all his toes cut off that had frozen solid in his shoes. That was why his shoes turned up at the ends to this day. Rosacoke didn't know how long he had been here or whether he was ready to leave, but it seemed to her he ought to go before the others arrived as he wasn't dressed for any funeral so she said "Landon." She wasn't scared of Landon. She had gone in the store herself and bought him bottles of paregoric (with his quarters) when she was little and nobody would sell him another drop. She said, "Landon, wake up." But he slept on. "Landon, this is Miss Rosacoke. You get up from there."

He was ready. He opened his eyes and said, "Good morning, Miss Rosacoke," just like he had met her in the road on the way to work.

"It's afternoon, Landon, and will you please get up and go home?"

"Yes'm," he said, sitting up, noticing he was in church and smiling, "Here I am again." Then, "What *you* doing here, Miss Rosacoke?"

"They are burying Mildred."

"What's wrong with Mildred?"

"She died."

"Well, I do say." He got to his feet and put on his cap and tipped it to her and headed as best he could for the door beside the choir that led out back. Rosacoke went on into the pew and raised the window. When Landon got to the door—he even had his hand on the knob—he turned and said, "I'm some kin to Mildred, ain't I?"

"Her uncle, I guess."

"Yes'm, that's it." Then he could leave.

The church sat sideways to Wesley's tree and the road, and Rosacoke could stay by her win-

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dow and see what happened in the yard. Landon wasn't ten feet out the back when the truck turned in, having a little trouble with the ruts Wesley made and bringing twelve cars behind it, each one paler with dust than the one before and all loaded full. The cars unloaded in order and the first two women were Mildred's mother Mary and Mildred's sister Estelle, who had stayed at home when all the others scattered because of her health which was poor from the night Manson Hargrove shot her at a dance, both barrels in the chest. (She lived though—shooting Estelle's bosom was like shooting a feather bed.) Then came the little boys that belonged to most anybody. They were brought to help carry the flowers, but when they swarmed out and saw Wesley, they took off towards him and stared at his motor-cycle like it was the Chariot of God and could fly. But Wesley had stopped his tinkering when Mildred arrived. He answered one or two questions the boys asked—"What do it burn?" and he told them "Coal"—and then nodded good afternoon to Mary and shut up and leaned against the tree. Somebody called out, "You boys come get these flowers." They went over and took up the wreaths and brought them towards the church, and the one in front wore roses round his neck like a horse that has won and can smile.

Mary and Estelle stood by the truck, looking, and that boy kept his eyes and his foot flat on the box like it was his and nobody was getting it. Then the other women came up, silent. One of them—Aunt Mannie Somerville who had walked six miles to get here and was so old she didn't remember a soul now she *was* here—hugged Mary and said what seemed to be a signal, and they climbed the steps—two girls nearly lifting Aunt Mannie, who could walk any distance except *up* and who would be next. But the men stayed by the truck, and when the flowers had gone in, that boy leaned over and shoved the box to the end and four men took it—to say they *had*; any two of them could have carried it alone. They stood for a minute with it on their shoulders, taking their bearings. Somebody laughed high and clear. The preacher turned to the church and all the men followed.

ROSACOKE saw all that and thought every minute Wesley would break loose and take his seat beside her. But he didn't, not even when the yard was empty, and when she heard Mary and Estelle leading the others in, she had to take her eyes off him and stand up and nod to the people as they passed and call them by their names—the family taking the front row and sitting down like something had pressed them and the others filling in behind, leaving Rosacoke her empty row at the back, and all standing up—except the ones with babies—till the box was laid on two saw-horses in front of the pulpit, and a boy laid some flowers on the lid where he reckoned Mildred's face was—one design, the Bleeding Heart that Mary asked Rosacoke to send (white carnations with red roses at the centre that it would take her some time to pay for). When that was done, five women stood up in various pews and walked to the choir. The piano started and stopped and for a second there was just Bessie Williams' voice slicing through the heat with six high words, asking the others to follow. It was "Precious Name, Show Me Your Face," and it was Jesus they were singing to—meaning it, looking up at the roof to hornets' nests and spiders like it might all roll away and show them what they asked to see. But the song ended and Rev. Mingie thanked the ladies and said Mrs. Ransom had composed the obituary and would read it now. Mrs. Ransom stood up where she was, smiling, and turned to face Mary and Estelle and read off the paper she held, "Miss Mildred Sutton was born in 1936 in the bed where she died. Her mother was Mary Sutton of this community, and her father was Wallace Sutton, whereabouts unknown, but who worked some years for the Highway and, before that, said he fought in France and got gassed and buried alive and was never the same again. She had a brother and three sisters, and they are living in Baltimore and Philadelphia—except Estelle who is with us here—and are unable to come but have sent telegrams of their grief which will be read later. She grew up all around here and worked in cotton for Mr. Isaac Alston and went to school off and on—I taught her some myself—till she started cooking for the Drakes and tending to their children that she loved like they were hers. She worked for them nearly two years, and they would surely be here to-day if they weren't taking their vacation at Willoughby Beach. Mildred aimed to go with them right up to the last and then wasn't able. She stayed here and died not far from her twenty-first birthday. Her favourite tune was "Annie Laurie" which she learned from Miss Rosacoke Mustian who is with us to-day, representing the white friends, and I will

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sing it now at her mother's request." And standing where she was, she sang it through alone, not to any tune Rosacoke had ever heard but making it on the air as she went, knowing Mildred would never object to that.

Then the preacher read the telegrams. They were all very much like the one from Alec her brother, THINKING TO-DAY OF LITTLE SISTER AND SORRY THE CAR IS BROKE. That seemed sufficient reason—everybody nodded their heads and one or two said "Amen."

Rosacoke sat through that, only trying to see past every flapping fan to the box, and every now and then somebody would turn to see was she there and, seeing her, smile as if the whole afternoon would fold under if she didn't watch it with her familiar face (the way a boy three rows ahead watched her, holding her in his gaze like some new thing, untried, that might go up in smoke any minute). It was that hot inside, and her mind worked slowly back through spring water and shade till she was almost in the night with Wesley, but the voice came at her faintly where she was—"Miss Rosacoke, will you kindly view the body?" It was the preacher standing by her, and she turned from the window—"Now?"

"Yes'm, she is ready." They had uncovered Mildred and they wanted Rosacoke to see her first. Mama had warned her this would happen, but there didn't seem to be a way out. She stood up hoping the preacher would walk with her (and he did, a few feet behind) and went to the box, setting her eyes on the pulpit just over it so she wouldn't see Mildred the whole way.

They had laid Mildred in a pink nightgown that tied at the throat and had belonged to the lady she cooked for, but she had shrunk to nothing this last week as if her life was so much weight, and the gown was half-empty. She never had much bosom—Estelle got most of that and when they were twelve, Rosacoke told her, "Mildred, why don't you buy some stuffing? Your bosoms look like fried eggs"—and the ones she had, swollen uselessly now, were settled on her arms that lay straight down her sides and left her hands out of sight that were her good feature. Sometime during the ride her body had twisted to the left, and her profile crushed bitterly into the pillow. Whoever took off the lid had left her alone. Rosacoke wondered if she should move her back for all to see. She looked at the preacher and nearly asked if that was what he meant her to do. But she thought and turned and walked to her seat down the middle aisle with her eyes to the ground, passing through everybody waiting to look, feeling stronger with her part done and Mildred turned to the wall behind her where nobody would see.

AND so was Wesley turned away. He was squatting on the ground, and his shoes were sunk in the dust, but he was polishing every spoke in the wheels of that machine like he never again intended driving it over anything but velvet rugs. The congregation lined up to view Mildred, and Rosacoke had time to think—"To-morrow he will ride it to Norfolk and take his new job and sell motor-cycles for maybe the rest of his life, but he can't leave it alone for one hour and sit by me through this service."

But he polished on with his arms moving slow as if they moved through clear thick oil, and at times he would rock back on his heels to study what he had done, and his sides would move above his belt to show he was breathing deep—the only way he gave in to the heat. When he was satisfied he stood up and cleaned his hands on a rag and his arms to where his sleeves were rolled. But it was grease he was wiping, not sweat. He was somebody who could shine a whole motor-cycle in the month of July and not sweat, and his dark hair (still cut for the Navy and stopping high up his neck) was dry. It didn't seem natural and when he leaned against his tree again and stared at the ground, he looked to Rosacoke as cool as one November day seven years ago, and she thought about that day, so clear and cool—the first she saw of Wesley. He lived five miles from her, and all her life she heard about the Beavers but never saw one till that day—a Saturday—when she went out in Mr. Isaac's woods to pick up pecans off the ground. It was too early for that though—the leaves were gone but the nuts hung on still, waiting for a wind and there was no wind this day—so she was heading home with mighty little in her bucket, going slow, just considering it a walk now when she looked ahead, and in one tall tree that the path bent round was a boy, spreading his arms between the branches and bracing his feet like he was the eagle on money. It was a pecan tree and she walked straight up under it and said, "Boy, shake me down some nuts." Not saying a word he gripped the branches tighter and rocked the fork he stood in, and nuts fell on her like hail by the hundred till she yelled out to stop or else her skull would

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crack. He stopped and she picked up all the pecans she could carry, thinking the whole time he would climb down and help her, but he stayed up there and when she looked up at him once or twice, he wasn't even watching her—just braced on his long legs that rose up in blue overalls to his low waist and his narrow chest and bare white neck and his hair that was brown and still cut for the summer, high above his ears by somebody at home, and his eyes that stared straight out at sights nobody else in Warren County was seeing unless they were up a pecan tree.

"What are you looking at?" she asked him.

"Smoke."

She looked but the sky looked clear to her. "Don't you want to share out these pecans?"—as if bushels of them weren't lying all around her.

"I don't much like them," he said.

"Well, what are you doing up that tree then?"

"Waiting, I guess."

"Who for?"

"Just waiting."

"Who are you?"

"Wesley"—like he was the only Wesley ever made.

"Don't you want to know who I am?"

"Who are you?"

"Rosacoke Mustian—how old are you?"

"Going on sixteen."

"That's old enough to get your driving licence. My brother Milo and me slept in the same bed till he got his driving licence, and then Mama said he would have to move."

He smiled at that and she saw the smile was as close to victory as she was coming that day so she said, "Thank you for shaking the tree" and went on home and didn't see him again for two years, but she thought of him in the evenings as long as those nuts lasted—him caring for nothing but the smoke she couldn't see, wondering if there was fire somewhere, waiting.

Through that the line went on past Mildred. Some of them—the young ones mostly—skipped by her fast as they could and took a little look and jerked away, and Jimmy Jenkins fell out in the aisle on his way to sit down because he held his eyes shut till he was past Mildred (to keep from having her to remember). A good many took their time though and were sorry her head had turned, but nobody reached in to set her straight, and when Minnie Foote's baby got held up to see and dropped his pacifier in the box with Mildred, they just considered that pacifier gone for good—except the baby who commenced to moan and would have cried if Minnie hadn't sat down in time and unbuttoned and nursed him off to sleep so deep he didn't hear Dump Fishel when she saw Mildred and wailed "Sweet Jesus" at the sight, but the name went out to Wesley wherever he was (out the window and facing the church but not seeing it, not studying the funeral), and he looked up quick and smiled—maybe at Rosacoke, maybe at the whole hot church—and still smiling straddled his cycle in a long high leap like a deer and plunged downward on the starter like that same deer striking the earth and turned loose a roar that tore through the grove and the whole afternoon like dry cloth ripped without warning and Wesley was gone.

Rosacoke saw it that way, that slowly. After her remembering she had turned from the window to watch the last ones pass by Mildred and to get ready for the testimonials that would be next, but when Dump released her "Jesus," Rosacoke looked out to Wesley again to see what he would do about *that*, saying to herself, "That is one something he has got to notice." So she saw it from the beginning—his leap—seeing the deer in him as he started and with him still smiling, something even stronger when he reared on his black boots with the calf of his leg thrusting backwards through his trousers to turn loose the noise. She could see that and not think once what he had done or wonder would he come back. She could even turn and watch Mary and Estelle being led to take their last look and breaking down and taking everybody in the church with them into tears except Rosacoke who had as much right as anybody, knowing Mildred so long. But she didn't cry because suddenly the sound of Wesley's cycle stopped—he had taken it up the road a quarter of a mile beyond the church and now surely he would be circling round and coming back to wait. And sure enough he began again and bore down on the church like an arrow for their hearts till every face turned to Rosacoke, wondering couldn't *she* stop his fuss, but she looked straight ahead, not seeing him when the noise got louder and loudest of all and fell away quick as it had come. That little staring boy three rows ahead slapped his leg and said out loud, "Mama, he *gone*." Wesley had passed her by. He was headed for the concrete road, she

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guessed, and the twenty miles to Mason's Lake and the picnic and everybody there.

"Supposing he is gone for good," she said to herself. "Supposing I never lay eyes on him again." That made her wonder what she would have left, what there would be that she could take out and hold or pass around and say, "This is what I got from knowing somebody named Wesley Beavers."

THERE were these many things—a handful of paper in a drawer at home that was the letters and postal cards he had sent her. (He didn't write much and when he did, it was like getting a court order, so distant and confusing that you wondered for days what he meant by some sentence he meant *nothing* by and wound up wishing he hadn't written at all or wanting to call him up, long distance, wherever he was and say, "Wesley, I would like to read you this one sentence you wrote," and then read him his own words, "We went to Ocean View last Saturday and met some folks at a eating stand, and they asked us why we didn't come on and go skinny-dipping by moonlight so we did and had a pretty good time and stayed there till Monday morning early," and afterwards ask him, "Wesley, will you tell me what sort of folks you would meet at a hotdog stand, and what is *skinny-dipping* please?" But how could you just pick up the phone and pay good money to say that when all Wesley would do was say, "What are *you* worried about?") Besides the letters there was one picture of him—a grinning one in uniform—and a poem she wrote for a What I am Seeking in an Ideal Mate Contest (but never sent in as it got out of hand) and a sailor cap he gave her at her request. (She could have bought it for a dollar at any Army-Navy store. She wore it once when he came home, hoping he would take a few photos of her but of course he didn't, and finally she *gave* him the only likeness he had of her, practically forced it on him as a birthday present—Rosacoke Mustian from the neck up, tinted, and looking less like herself than anybody you could imagine.)

That much, then, but wasn't that much left of everybody she ever knew who was gone for good?—the rusty snuff cans that kept turning up around the yard as signs of Papa, and even the collars of every dog she ever had, and a 1936 New Jersey licence plate that hung on the back porch to this day—the one thing left of her own blood father who found it the evening she was born, lost on the highway and brought it home drunk as a monkey and nailed it up over the waterbucket and said, "Will everybody please recall this is the year my daughter was born"—that one thing and nothing else, not a picture, not a thread, no more than if he had been swept away by the Holy Ghost, bag and baggage, in a pillar of fire instead of drunk and taken at dusk by a pick-up truck he never saw but walked straight into like it was a place to rest.

So would there be more than that of Wesley?—anything besides that first November day and a lot of Saturday nights and this last afternoon with him vanishing in a roar and dust? It came to her—what he had said the night before when he was quiet and she asked him if, when he was in the Navy, he looked much at her picture. "Sometimes," he said. "Why?" she said and he said, "Because I would forget what you looked like" and then laughed. Thinking about it though, she reckoned he meant it, laugh and all. He had known her six years nearly, and when he went that far from home, sometimes he forgot her face. But what was so bad about that? Rosacoke herself when she went to 4-H camp in the summers (and that was for only eight days) would lie on her cot at night, thinking, and suddenly one of them—Mama or Rato or Milo or Papa—would be walking around in her thoughts with no more face than a cheese has got. She would strain to recollect the features and even try to draw out a face in the air with her finger, but sometimes it wouldn't come till she got back home and looked. Funny how when you could remember every mole on President Roosevelt's face and see Andy Gump as clear as if he had ever breathed, still you couldn't call up a face you had spent your whole life with. But it never was Wesley she forgot even when he was no more to her than the furthest Arab on the burning sands.

There would be the way he looked. And wouldn't that be with her always?—whoever she would meet, wherever she would go even in her sleep—the sight of his face up a tree among the pecans or down from the tree seven years and turned to what he was this afternoon but holding in him all the time that younger Wesley, unchanged and hard at the core, untouched and maybe untouchable but enough like a seed, unlabelled and rattling in her hand, to keep her wondering from now on if he wouldn't have gone on growing—that first

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Wesley—and learned a way to look at people that didn't make them feel ten thousand miles away and to think about something but the U.S. Navy and motor-cycles, and to talk to people when they talked to him and say whatever he meant and stand still—supposing he had learned all that before it was too late, wouldn't he have made a lovely sight, and then if some day he had ever had to go, couldn't he have left something suitable behind him such as a child that would bear his funny name but have his face and be half hers and answer when she called?

It was the one thing left of Mildred (once they lidded that box again)—her child that had lived God only knew how, dark and hard and dry in the orange crate they had lined with white and laid him in, his back curved inwards and his spidery arms and legs twisting inwards to his navel like something was winding him up with a key or like he didn't know he was already born and had killed his mother and that there was nothing to call him but Doctor Sledge as no father came forward to tell him what his real name was—hard dry little fellow with nothing to go on but half his mother's blood and maybe her looks and the way she used to talk held inside him in case he lived, waiting.

THE preacher was waiting too now that they had got Mary and Estelle away from Mildred and set them down again. He had intended to have the testifying next, but he could see that Rosacoke was studying something besides this funeral so he went ahead and gave his remarks that were supposed to be the last thing before they shut the box—about all of us being raised from the grave including Mildred, but not a word about that live baby no more than if Mildred had died of sore throat. He watched Rosacoke the whole time to see when she would look around and be ready, but she looked on out the window through every word, even the prayer, and when he came to the end of all he could do, he had to say quietly to the back row, "Miss Rosacoke, we all know Mildred thought a heap of you, and it seem like you thought a heap of her"—a lot of people said "Amen"—"and I wonder is there any testifying you could do for her now?" His voice carried and Rosacoke looked round slow and blank as if he had called her from the edge of sleep. To help her out he went on, "If you can find anything in your heart to say, we would be mighty glad." Everybody was watching her. She nodded her head. She had meant to think out in advance what was best to say, but nothing about this afternoon had gone as she intended. She bit at her upper lip because of the heat and stood up and said, "I hadn't seen much of Mildred lately, but we always observed each other's birthday, her and me, and the other evening I thought to myself it is nearly Mildred's twenty-first birthday so I walked down to her place after supper and nobody was there except dogs. I didn't know till the next afternoon they had carried her to the hospital. There I was just wanting to give her a pair of stockings and wish her a long and happy life and she was already gone."

That was what she could find in her heart. She wondered if there ought not to be more, but if there was, it was covered now by other things. She sat down and before anybody could thank her, she thought what seemed to be the truth right then—"Everybody I know is gone." In the stifling air she went as cold all over as a pane of glass and took up her pocket-book and pressed her hat safe on her head and walked straight out of church, not out of grief, not shedding a tear but stopping the funeral dead till everybody had watched her out of sight and Mrs. Ransom had said, "She is overcome" and punched Sammy her son at the end of her row and told him, "Sammy, go see what ails that child." Sammy went and there was Rosacoke on the middle step, hanging on to her hat like a storm was due, the sun laying her shadow backwards to the door and her just staring down the road. Not wanting to scare her by speaking, Sammy struck a match on his shoe and lit a cigarette. She looked around—just her dry eyes—and said, "Sammy, aren't you burning up in all that wool?" (Sammy was in dark blue—the one man she had seen all day dressed like he knew what a funeral was.)

"If you needing to go somewhere, Miss Rosacoke, Sammy can take you." He said it as gentle as if it was the hospital she might need.

She hesitated as if she was thinking of a map and was on the verge of saying something distant such as—"Buffalo." "I don't reckon so, Sammy. I may have to go home and I can walk that."

"In this heat?"

"I have played baseball in worse than this and so have you," she said. Then thinking what she had done by walking out on the testifying, she said, "I don't intend to ruin Mildred's funeral any further by taking *you* away. Go on

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back in and tell Mary I'm sorry I can't stay, but I have got to locate Wesley."

"No telling where he is, Miss Rosacoke, with that machine between his legs."

"No. But I'll be saying good-bye to you, Sammy."

"Yes'm." And she walked into the yard and towards the road in her high heels that weren't meant for standing in, much less walking. Sammy finished up his cigarette and saw her vanish at the first turn. He was the age of her oldest brother Milo, and this was the first day he had ever called her *Miss* Rosacoke—nothing else to call her, the way she looked, though they had played many a game of baseball together with Milo and Rato (and Mildred and Mildred's sister Baby Lou at shortstop). He was a pall-bearer and it was generally guessed he was the one might tell the world what the rightful name of Mildred's baby was so he went back to where they had given up waiting. Bessie Williams was singing "Come Thee Disconsolate" which by now Rosacoke couldn't hear.

She walked in the middle of the road, looking down. Wherever the dust was thick, there would be the track of Wesley's cycle printed like a message to her. Seeing that, she would speed up a little and sad as she felt, smile and think, "What do I think I am—an Indian nosing out a deer?" But she would come to long stretches where the dust had blown away, and there would be nothing but the baked red ground that took no more sign of Wesley than if he had flown every now and then. The smile would fade and she would walk even faster to get to the next deep dust till her legs from the knee down, nearly, were streaked with the red and her shoes were fit for nothing but burning —she could see that but she said right out to the trees around her, "I will see him if I have to walk to Norfolk." That thought clogged through her chest and mouth till she gasped for every breath she got, and everything else was choked—Mildred, the heat, her shoes—leaving nothing but Wesley hanging up in her, not speaking a word, and her at the worst she had ever been. She couldn't cry. She couldn't speak. But she thought, "I have spent five years thinking of Wesley Beavers day and night, giving him things he didn't want, writing him letters he barely answered, and now I am trailing him like a dog and him at Mason's Lake, I know, cooling off. I will stop walking when I get home and rest in the swing, and I hope he sells motor-cycles till he drops."

She was coming to Mr. Isaac's woods where the deer had been so long ago for her and Mildred, and Wesley's tracks that hadn't showed for a while showed again—not straight but twisting around the road from ditch to ditch. "If that is his idea of fun, I'm glad I'm walking," she said and looked up at the woods and decided to step in and take their shade till she was cool again.

Between the road and the woods was a narrow gully from the last rain. Rosacoke took off her shoes and held her hat and jumped it and landed right away in deep moss that was cool with damp from God-knew-where. She took a look in both empty directions and decided to go on barefooted so she struck inwards a little from the road, and when it was nearly out of sight, she turned and walked on parallel to the narrow dust she could see through the trees. She was still in hollering distance if anybody was to pass that needed hollering at. Working indoors all summer the way she had, her feet were tender and she yielded to them with pouts and little hunches of her shoulders when a stick cracked under her or a rock pressed up from under the ground, and the sight of an old blacksnake stopped her dead till he raised up as if to speak and she beat him to it—"Well, old brother, which way are *you* headed?" and he went looping off slow over a log and on deeper in the trees. That kept her looking at the ground from then on, but once when she stopped to breathe, there was a red cardinal staring at her from the same bent tree she and Mildred had called a horse and ridden a thousand miles. She couldn't think how a cardinal sang, but any bird will answer you once, however you sound, so she whistled three notes, and he answered just to show her the right way. "Thank you," she told him and tried it his way, but he had given all he meant to give and sat there and swelled up. "What are you looking so biggity about?" she asked him. "You look like every cardinal *I* ever saw." He headed on too for the heart of the woods—north—and if he wanted to, he could make Virginia by dark. She called after him, "You better stay in North Carolina, boy. You are the official bird here." Then she wondered, "Why don't I follow him and see where *he* leaves me?" But what reason was there to take off bare-footed after a bird? —unless he was aiming for the spring. The spring would be reason enough. She looked back to the road, but the dust lay still. Nobody

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was going anywhere or coming back so she struck deeper for the spring with that bird singing before her like his heart would burst.

The only path to the spring was two tracks the width apart of Mr. Isaac's truck wheels, left from the days when nobody but he and a few wild children knew it was there. She followed on, picking her way through glossy poison oak, and when she came to the spring (the bird wasn't there, he was half-way to Virginia), it was only a wet circle in the leaves, choked with whatever had fallen from the trees since Mr. Isaac's stroke. (It had been his private spring that he kept clean long as he could, not for drinking purposes but to cool his feet.) Rosacoke laid down her shoes and hat and bent over and put her hands in where the leaves were wettest—slowly, hoping there wasn't a lizard around—and lifted them out till there was a basin of brown water the size of the evening sun and cold as winter ever got. Looking in it, trying to see her face, she thought of the evening they discovered this spring—her and her brothers and maybe five Negroes. They had chased all the way from home, hollering some game back and forth till Milo who was leading stopped and raised up his hand like an Indian brave. They halted in a ragged line behind him, and before they could speak, they saw what he had seen—Mr. Isaac there through the darkening leaves, his trousers rolled high and pure cold water ringing round his little bird ankles and him not noticing the children at all or where the sun had got to, but staring ahead, thinking. He looked up once in their direction —maybe he couldn't see—but never spoke a word, not to say "Go on" or "Come here," and directly they all whirled round and started home, circling him wide, leaving him to whatever it was made him look like that. Afterwards, some scorching days they would come and look at the spring and think how cool it was, but seeing Mr. Isaac that once was all they needed. Not a one of them would have waded in if they had been blazing bright from the waist down. Rosacoke had drunk from it though on the day they saw the deer (she had remembered the deer), checking first to see had Mr. Isaac waded lately, then bending over and touching the water with nothing but her lips. She had told Mildred, "Come on. He ain't been here to-day and it's run clean," but Mildred said, "I don't care if he ain't been here in a month. I can wait. That ain't mouth water no more."

It would be mouth water now—rising up clean for nobody but Rosacoke. Everybody else had forgotten or was long past needing cool feet and drinks of water. She took her seat in the shade on ground that the sun hadn't touched since the trees were bare and thought of washing her dusty feet. The broiling day was above her, but her feet were deep in moss, and damp was creeping through her dress. "Let the spring run clean," she thought. "I am cool enough the way I am. It will take time but time is the one thing left of *this* day, and when it is clean I can drink. Maybe some water is all I need."

And maybe while the spring ran clean, she could find the broom straw field. Surely the deer was there and even if she failed to see him, wouldn't he still see her?—peeping through the cluttered woods with his black eyes, watching every step she took, twitching his tail in fright, and not remembering at all that other summer day, not connecting this changed tall girl with the other one he had seen, not wondering where the black girl was, not caring, not needing—only water, grass, the moss to lie in and the strength of his four legs to save his life. But wasn't it miles to walk? Hadn't it taken them an hour to get there, and even if the deer was to kneel and eat from her hand, who would there be to cry "Great God A-mighty" like Mildred had?—to show it was the one wonderful thing she ever saw, the one surprise. Her baby was no surprise. Rosacoke had met her in the frozen road last February when they were both working and hadn't met for some time. They agreed on how cold it was and wouldn't they be glad to see summer. That seemed all they had to say till Mildred moved to go, and her old black coat swung open—there was her chest flat under a shrunk-up pink sweater that hugged tight to the hard new belly stuck in her skirt like a coconut shell. Rosacoke asked her, "Mildred, what in the world is that?"

"Nothing but a baby," she said and smiled and shut her coat.

"Whose?"

"Well, several have asked me not to say."

"Is it somebody from around here?"

"Bound to be."

"And you haven't tried to throw it?"

"What I want to throw him for, Rosacoke?"

"Won't nobody marry you?"

"Some of them say they studying about it. Ain't no hurry. Just so he come with a name."

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"Why on earth did you do it, Mildred?"

"I don't hardly know."

"Well, are you glad?"

"Don't look like *glad* got nothing to do with it. He coming whether I glad or not"—and said good-bye and walked away home. Rosacoke had stood in the road, shivering, to watch her out of sight. She went with her thin wrists held to her sides, not swinging, and her fine hands clenched, and when she was gone around the first bend (not looking back once), she was gone for good. Rosacoke never saw her again—not alive, not her face. Mama had said, "I don't want you going to Mildred's another time till they get a Daddy for that baby. The way she's been messing around, they're going to have trouble finding one, and there's liable to be some cutting before they do." Rosacoke had stayed away, not just because of what Mama said but because that one cold afternoon was the end of whatever Mildred she had known before. Now Mildred knew things Rosacoke didn't know, things she had learned just lying still in the dark, taking her child from somebody she couldn't see, and what could you say to that new Mildred, her load growing in her every second without a name, sucking blind at his mother's life till his time came and he tore out and killed her and left himself with nothing on earth but a black mouth to feed and the hot air to howl in.

"And here I have walked out on her burying because of Wesley Beavers and his popping machine," she said and stood up at the sound of his name. It was her first thought of Wesley since seeing that bird and it startled her. She said it again—just the name—to test herself. But the name came easy now, not with so much rising in her chest. This was the way she worked—let Wesley pull one of his tricks or go back to Norfolk from a leave and she would nearly die with grief or anger till she could think of something big enough to take her mind off how he looked, not smiling, not answering when she called. Not everything was big enough, only things that had no connection with Wesley such as people telling you sad stories or going to walk where Wesley had never been. Sometimes nothing big enough would come, and then there was nothing to do but hope each night the next day would be better, and usually it would (though she had to keep her eyes off pecan trees and not hear rain frogs beyond the creek at night or harmonica music). She would go on that way and finally be all right and free and bothered by nothing but, sometimes, the thought, "How can I say I love somebody who can leave and not worry me no more than this?"—till he came home again, bringing his face like a chain to loop around her neck.

Now with Mildred on her mind, she was free, and from sitting a while she was cooler. She looked into the spring. It was working but it wouldn't be clear before night. "I will just rinse off my feet," she thought, "and go home and stir up some Kool-Ade and set in the swing and think of what to do for that baby to make up for how I acted to-day."

She pulled her dress high above her knees and sat again by the edge of the spring and not being able to see the bottom, stuck in her red feet slowly, saying, "If there's water moccasins down there, they are welcome to *these* feet." But her feet sank into cold mud and brown clouds wreathed the shank of each white leg. She pulled her dress even higher and showed—to herself, to any passing bird—the tender blue inside her thighs that had barely seen the light all summer. Seemed a pity—even to her—having that firmness and keeping it hid (unless she went to Ocean View and showed it to every sailor on the sand). "Well, you're saving it, honey, till the right time comes," she said, breaking the silence above her where the birds had quieted—she wondered when, not noticing them so long. Then she saw the mess she was making of the spring and thought, "I'd be ashamed if I didn't know it would purify a thousand times before anybody needs it again."

But she was wrong. A dim rustling broke the quiet between her and the road, and gradually it turned to somebody's footsteps bearing down on the cracking sticks towards her. "Everybody I know is picnicking or burying," she thought, "and no stranger is catching me like this." She grabbed up her shoes and ran twenty yards to hide behind a cedar. The steps came on and she peeped out. Whoever it was hadn't appeared, but there lay her hat by the spring big as a road sign and no hope of getting it now because it was a man that was coming—his shape moved on through the leaves but not his face, not yet.

It was Wesley who broke into sight, stroking through the branches like a swimmer with his head held down and his ankle boots turning in the soft ground till he was beside the spring and shaking his head to see how muddy it was.

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Rosacoke strained to see on him some sign of where he had been and why he was here, but all she could tell was that, wherever he had gone, he had combed his hair—a fresh part marched across his head like a chalk line—and that he was almost standing on her hat, and what would he do when he saw it? But he looked down for a long time, working his tongue in his mouth as if the next thing to do was spit in the spring and complete the mess, and Rosacoke's hat might as well have been air.

When he moved, it was a step backward to leave, and Rosacoke hoped he would step on her hat—then she could speak—but he missed the hat and turned to the road. She took the last chance and stepped out and said, "Wesley, what do *you* know about this spring?"

He reached with both hands for his black belt as if guns were hanging there for such emergencies and hitched up his trousers—"I know somebody has stirred Hell out of it."

"That was me," she said, "I was just rinsing off my feet when I heard you coming—except I didn't know it was you. I figured you was picnicking by now."

He smiled and took another look at the spring and frowned. She walked towards him, holding her shoes. "I don't stir it up *every* day, Wesley. I don't strike out home in the dust every day either." She bent down for her hat—he never moved his foot an inch. "I was watching you from behind that cedar, wondering when you would notice my hat."

"I didn't know it was yours," he said.

"Good thing it wasn't a rabbit trap or you'd have lost a leg." She set it on her tangled hair. "I'll have my name painted on it real big so you won't fail to know me next time." Then she dried her feet with the palm of her hand and put on her shoes.

"You ready for this picnic?" he asked.

She looked to see where the sun had got to. It was well past three o'clock. "I had given up on the picnic, Wesley. Anyhow, by the time we got there everybody would be gone."

"Suits me," he said. "There'll be just that much more water to swim in. But Milo will be there you know, and your Mama said she would save me some chicken."

"Well, I can't go looking like the Tarbaby. You will have to stop at home and let me change my clothes."

"No need," he said. "Everybody will look like Tarbabies by the time we get there," and he took her hand and started for the road. They were nearly at the cycle, and Rosacoke had stood it long as she could—"You haven't said a word about where you tore off to or what I was doing at the spring."

"I went home to get something I forgot, and you said you was cooling off."

"I don't normally walk a mile on a July day to soak my feet."

"If you will hush up, we can ride twenty miles, and you can soak everything you've got."

"I have soaked sufficient, thank you. I have also changed clothes three times to-day—going on four—and I wouldn't peel off again to bathe in the River Jordan."

"Well, it's nothing but Mason's Lake we're going to, and you can sit on the bank and watch me execute a few Navy dives."

He was already on the cycle and waiting for her, but there was one more thing to ask. "Wesley, how did you know about Mr. Isaac's spring?"

"Somebody showed it to me a long time ago."

"Who?"

"One of my old girl friends." He laughed like it wasn't so but it was—and laughed on in Rosacoke's head above the roar while she climbed on and laughed still when she laid against his back like sleep, wondering only who that old girl was till they were half-way to the lake and she changed to remembering Mildred. "They are burying Mildred Sutton now. If I had not forgot, I would be there where my duty lies—not *here*, anyhow, hanging on to somebody I don't know, streaking on towards a good time, straddling all the horsepower Wesley Beavers owns."

MILO sighted them first of anybody from where he stood at the top of the tin sliding board, slicking back his hair and detaining a whole line of children behind him while he decided whether to try it head-first (and risk rupturing a thing or two) or just his normal way. From the top he could see where the highway bent by the lake, and when Wesley and Rosacoke turned off and were near enough to notice him, his problem was solved—he flipped belly-down on the wet slide and hollered, "Here comes Rosa" and waved with one hand and held his nose with the other and shot, head to toe out of sight into the muddy lake. A cannon sound rose up behind him. (He was twenty-four years old, and Sissie his wife was as pregnant as women ever got.)

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Wesley had seen Milo and stopped by the water. He laughed again with his goggles turned to the spot where Milo sank and said, "I bet there ain't a scrap of skin left on either side of Milo," but behind the goggles he was skimming the whole lake to see who was floating around, even while he helped Rosacoke down. She was looking too. They were looking for the same floater, and Willie Duke Aycock was nowhere in sight.

Milo surfaced and stood up in the shallow end near them, every hair on him curling downward to the lake like streams. He grabbed his groin and moaned, laughing, "Good thing Sissie is already served. *I'm* finished." Then he rearranged everything inside his trunks and said, "Wesley son, I don't advise you to try no belly-sliding else you might deprive Rosa of a lovely future."

Rosacoke said "Milo *behave!*" But she smiled and Baby Sister came out to meet them with a string of little wet girls—mostly Guptons.

"You just missed the baptising," Baby Sister said. "I have baptised everyone of these children to-day—some of them more than once."

"I'm glad you got them before they passed on," Wesley said, walking already towards the bath house, taking off his shirt as he went. "They look like cholera chickens right now." The Guptons just eyed him—not understanding—yellow and nosy and slick as peeled squirrels with hard round stomachs poking through their bathing suits and tan hair roping round their eyes raw and wide from so much dipping.

"You two don't look so good yourselves," Baby Sister said and huffed off towards what was left of the Pepsi Colas, leaving the Guptons hanging in the blistering sun.

Rosacoke called after her, "Where is Mama?"

"Nursing Sissie over yonder in the shade."

The shade was behind the bath house under a close knot of pines that was all Mr. Mason had left, bull-dozing his lake, and the remainder of Delight Church's picnic was mostly spread out there—Mr. Isaac Alston in the black leather chair he went everywhere in (that he had barely left since his last stroke), waiting for Forrest his man to come back with the truck. His collar was undone and there was that line drawn straight through the middle of him—one side moving and one side still, and beyond him was Rosacoke's Mama on a wool blanket, fanning Milo's Sissie who was leaning back, white as fat meat, on a pine with her eyes shut and her hands folded on her belly, not expecting to live, and a little way from the trees in a pack of their own, a number of Guptons in chalk blue, all looking exactly alike, set up in the sand straight from the waist as hinges, shoving gnats off their bony legs and lean as if they had never eaten all they could hold (though they had just eaten half a picnic).

Rosacoke wasn't swimming and Mama had already seen her so there was nothing to do but go to the shade, dusty as she was and blown (with the feel of the wind from the ride still working in the roots of her hair). "How was the funeral?" Mama called to her, but Rosacoke stopped and tried to talk to Marise Gupton who had been to grammar school with her but looked a hundred years older from having most of the children Baby Sister had dipped. All Rosacoke could think to ask Marise was had she been swimming.

"I ain't swam once since my first baby," she said, and her fourth baby who was her first boy and three months old, named Frederick, cried from a wad of blankets on the ground behind her. Marise frowned up to Rosacoke at the noise, but she reached back and took him and laid him on one shoulder. He was hid in a heavy knit suit and a cap that covered his ears (all blue to match his family), and crying so hard, he looked like a fired cook stove.

Rosacoke said, "Don't you reckon he's *frying*, Marise?"

Marise said "No" and that seemed the end of what they could say as Marise was opening her dress with her left hand. Before she was open completely, Frederick rolled down his head, and his mouth was seeking her breast through blue cotton cloth. "Just *wait*," she said, a little harsh—to him, not Rosacoke. But Rosacoke waited too, not speaking, and Frederick found what he needed. Marise didn't talk either but watched her baby pulling hard. In a little, still sucking with his eyes shut tight, he half-way smiled and Marise gave him a quick little smile in return—her first of the day. Rosacoke might just as well have been in Egypt (and very nearly felt she was) so she looked on ahead and went towards Mama.

Mama said, "You look like you rode in on a circular saw" and kept on fanning Sissie.

"If that's what you call a motor-cycle, I *did*."

Sissie barely opened her eyes and said, "I wish somebody had taken me motor-cycle riding on a rocky road five months ago, and I wouldn't be this sick to-day."

"What's wrong with Sissie?"

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"Not a thing," said Mama, "except she had already eat her Brunswick stew when Milo announced about Mr. Gupton losing his teeth. But there was no way on earth to have told her any sooner. Mr. Gupton was the last man to stir the stew before they served it up, and he had been carrying his teeth in his shirt pocket to rest his gums. Well, everybody had commenced eating their portion except Mr. Gupton, and Milo noticed him frowning hard and feeling his pockets and looking on the ground all round the pot so Milo went over and asked him was anything wrong, and he said, 'I have mislaid my teeth.' *Mislaid!* There he had been leaning over twenty gallons of delicious stew for a solid hour, and where were his teeth *bound* to be? Well, not in the stew it turned out, but nobody knew that till some time later when one of the children found them, unbroken, over by the woodpile where he had dropped them, picking up wood. But as I say, Sissie had eat hers and collapsed at the false news long before the teeth appeared, and here she's laid ever since, me fanning her like a fool." Then Mama thought again of what she had waited all afternoon to hear. "How was the funeral?"

"Mama, it wasn't a picture show."

"I know that. I just thought somebody might have shouted."

"Maybe they did. I didn't stay to the end."

"Why not?" But Mama broke off—"Look at Wesley."

Wesley had run from the bath house and taken the high dive steps three at a time and up-ended down through the air like a mistake at first, rowing with his legs and calling "Milo" as he went (for Milo to laugh), but then his legs rose back in a pause and his arms cut down before him till he was a bare white tree (the air was that clear) long enough for Rosacoke to draw one breath while he went under slow —not a sound, not a drop and what began as a joke for Milo's sake didn't end as a joke.

"He can dive all right," Mama said. "Reckon he has touched bottom by now," and sure enough Wesley shot up, holding a handful of bottom overhead as proof, the black mud streaming down his arm.

"If he's been on the bottom, he's eat-up with leeches," Sissie said. "I told Milo if he got a leech on him, he wasn't coming near *me*."

"Wesley is too speedy for any leech to take hold of," Mama said.

"Amen," said Rosacoke to that.

"I can't speak for the leeches," Sissie said, "but Willie Duke Aycock has took hold already." (Willie Duke had had her eyes on Wesley since the seventh grade when she grew up overnight, several months before anybody else, and there she was paddling out to him and Milo now, moving into the deepest water with no more swimming ability than a window weight, so low in the water nobody could tell if she had on a stitch of clothes and churning hard to stay on top.)

"She can't keep it up long," Rosacoke said.

"Honey, she's got God's own waterwings inside her brassiere," Sissie said. (And Sissie was right. Willie Duke had won a Dairy Queen Contest the summer before, and the public remarks on her victory were embarrassing to all concerned.)

"Well, I don't notice Milo swimming away from her," Rosacoke said, at which Milo and Wesley grabbed Willie Duke and sank without a trace.

PEOPLE in the lake began circling the spot where the three went down, and Rosacoke stood up where she was, shading her eyes in hopes of a sign. Mama said, "They have been under long enough," and Baby Sister was running for the life guard when they appeared at the shallow end, carrying Willie Duke like a sack of meal to dry land and laying her down. Then they charged back and swam the whole lake twice, length and breadth—Milo thrashing like a hay baler—before they raced up to the shade and shook water on everybody's clothes and lit the two cigars Milo had in Sissie's bag.

There was a leech, yellow and slick, sucked to Wesley's leg. Nobody saw it till Sissie yelled. It was the last blow of the day for Sissie. She just folded up like a flower and lay back, swallowing loud. Mama stopped her fanning to look, and Milo, of course, made the first comment—"That leech is having *him* a picnic now" —and Wesley showed he wasn't too happy by stamping his foot. But Rosacoke sat up on her knees, and the leech, being almost on Wesley's hip, was level with her eyes, about the size of her little finger, holding on with both its ends and pulling hard at Wesley's life. She touched the end that was the mouth, and it crouched deeper inward.

"Don't pull it off, Rosa, or Wesley will bleed to death," Mama said.

And Milo said, "If we just leave him alone, he can get enough to last till the next church outing, and Wesley will never miss it."

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"Milo, if you are so interested in feeding animals, I'll turn him over to you just as soon as I get him off," Wesley said and took the cigar and tried to burn the leech's head, but his hand shook and he burnt his leg. "Rosa, you do it," he said and handed the cigar to her. She blew off the ashes and touched the mouth. It flapped loose and dangled a second before the tail let go, and when it hit the sand, it hunched off, not waiting, in three measuring steps towards the water before Mama got it with her shoe and buried it deep till there was no sign left but Wesley's blood still streaming. Rosacoke gave him a handkerchief to hold on the bite, and he wore it round his leg like a garter.

Then everybody could calm back down, talking a little about nothing, and when they felt the low late sun pressing so heavy through the pines, sleep seemed the next natural thing. Milo and Wesley stretched out in their bathing suits —hair and all laid right in the sand—and Rosacoke propped against the other side of Sissie's tree, and they slept off and on (except Mama who could never bat an eye till the sun went down, least of all with the Guptons spread out before her to watch) until the Guptons yelled their children in to go home, and in with the children came Baby Sister, hungry and saying so (and twelve years old with every crumb she ate turning to arms and legs). Mama tried to hush her but she woke up Wesley who was hungry too and who shook Milo's foot and said, "Milo, why don't you ask that question you was talking about in the lake?"

Milo came to and asked it. "Mama, what have you got in the way of something to eat?"

"Enough for us six," she said, "and we'll eat it when the five thousand leave." (She meant the Guptons. She couldn't fill them up.)

But it was already past five, and the lake had emptied of everything but one old man (not on the picnic) asleep in his innertube, rocking with the water while it slowed down and woke him up and the only clue to this being a pleasure lake was the high dive quivering still and the temporary-looking slide.

Up in the shade the last members of the picnic were leaving. Mr. Isaac's Forrest came back from the funeral with the truck and buttoned Mr. Isaac's collar and lifted him in and loaded on the chair. The Guptons lingered on to see what the Mustians were planning—every few minutes one of them would peep around in case an invitation was on the way. That got Milo's goat and when Frederick cried again, Milo said loud enough for Marise to hear, "What that baby needs is a bust in the mouth!"

Mama said "Hush."

And Sissie said, "He's *had* it twice already since noon. Don't make her pull it out again please."

So with nobody saying a word about supper, the Guptons had to leave, and when they were gone Baby Sister said "O.K., Mama."

Mama looked around and decided it was safe and pulled out the stew and chicken and a whole box of eggs (devilled before breakfast) that nobody but Milo would touch. They were deep in eating—even Sissie—when Mama said, "Oh, Lord." Willie Duke Aycock had appeared from the bath house door and was coming their way. But she stopped at a little distance and spoke nice to Mama and called Rosacoke's name like an item in a sick list and asked if she could speak to Wesley a minute.

"Go get her, son," Milo said, and Wesley went out to her with a silly grin that Willie Duke matched as if it was their secret. And she stood right there, facing the whole group and whispered to him with her tiny mouth. Her wet hair was plaited so tight it stretched her eyebrows up in surprise, and her high nose bone came beaking white through the red skin, and she had on the kind of doll-baby dress she would wear to a funeral (if it was hot enough) —the short sleeves puffing high on her strong arms and the hem striking her just above the wrinkled knees.

Rosacoke didn't speak a word. She swallowed once or twice more and then set down her supper, not wanting another bite, and all she had eaten hung in her stomach like a fist. Milo said, "*Sick* her, Rosa!" like Willie Duke was one bitch dog and Rosacoke was another.

"Shut up," she said and he did.

WHEN Willie Duke stopped whispering and walked away and Wesley came grinning back to take up his eating, Rosacoke couldn't look at him, but she frowned to silence Milo who was swelling with curiosity before her eyes. Wesley ate on, not alluding once to Willie Duke's brazen visit and everybody else was looking at the ground, picking at little roots and straws. Finally Milo had to speak— "How many more you got, Wesley?"

"More what?" Wesley asked, knowing very well *what*.

"Women trailing you? I bet they're strung up the road from here to Norfolk right now,

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waiting for you to pass."

Sissie said, "Milo just wishes he had a few, Wesley," but Wesley didn't say yes or no. And Rosacoke didn't make a sound. The trouble with Wesley was, he never denied anything.

"How do you know I ain't got a whole stable full?" Milo asked Sissie.

"Well, if you have, Sissie's got the key to the stable now, big boy," Sissie said and patted her belly that was the key.

Mama said they all ought to be struck dumb, talking that way around Baby Sister—around *anybody*.

"We are just joking, Mama, and nobody asked you to tune in," Milo said.

"I'm *not* tuned in, thank you, sir. I'm thinking about your brother and how he would have enjoyed this day." It was the first thought of Rato anybody had had for several weeks and they paused for it.

"He's happy as a baby right where he is," Milo said, "and getting all he can eat." (Rato had been in the Army three years as a messenger boy. When he enlisted they asked him what branch did he want to be in and he said, *"Calvary."* They said there hadn't been any cavalry for ten years and how about the infantry? He asked if that was a walking-soldier, and they said "Yes" but if he didn't mind carrying messages, he could so he said "All right.")

"I wasn't worried about him eating," Mama said. "I was just regretting he missed the funeral—off there in Oklahoma carrying messages on a Sunday hot as this. Rato knew Mildred good as any of you all did, and I reckon her funeral was good as any he will ever get the chance to see."

"Why didn't *you* go then and write him a description?" Rosacoke asked, seeing only that Mama was hoping to hear about the funeral now, not seeing that Mama was thinking of Rato too."

"Because my duty was with my own."

"Devilling eggs for Milo to choke over? Is that what you call your own? And fanning the flies off Sissie's belly? And keeping Baby Sister out of deep water? I'm glad you are sure of what's yours and what isn't." That came out of Rosacoke in a high, breaking voice she seldom used—that always scared her when it came. The skin of her face stretched back towards her ears and all the colour left. And Milo winked at Wesley.

Mama said the natural thing. "I don't know what you are acting so grand about. You said yourself you didn't stay to the end."

"No, I did not and do you want to know why? Because Wesley wouldn't sit with me but stayed outside polishing his machine and in the midst of everything, cranked up and went for a ride. I thought he had left me for good and I ran out."

Milo said, "Rosa, you can't get upset every time Wesley leaves for a minute. All of us tomcats got to make our rounds."

Wesley smiled a little but Rosacoke said, "Milo, you have turned out to be one of the sorriest people I know."

"Thank you, ma'am. What about your friend Wesley here?"

"I don't know about my friend Wesley. I don't know what he is planning from one minute to the next. I don't even know my place in that line of women you say is strung from here to Norfolk."

Milo turned to Wesley—Wesley was lying on his back looking at the tree—"Wesley, what is Rosacoke's place in your string of ladies? As I am her oldest brother, I have the right to ask."

Wesley lay on as if he hadn't heard. Then he rolled over suddenly, flinging sand from the back of his head, and looked hard at Rosacoke's chest, not smiling but as if there was a number on her somewhere that would tell her place in line. It took him a while, looking at all of her except her eyes, and when he opened his mouth to speak, Rosacoke jumped up and ran for the lake in her bare feet.

Mama said, "What have you done to her, Wesley?"

"Not a thing, Mrs. Mustian. I ain't said a word. She's been acting funny all day."

"It's her battery," Milo said. "Her battery needs charging. You know how to charge up an old battery, don't you, Wesley?"

Mama ignored him and said, "That child has had a sadder day than any of you know."

"Sad over what?" Milo asked.

"That funeral."

Sissie said she hadn't noticed *Mama* pouring soothing oil on anybody, and Milo said, "No use being sad about that funeral. I knew Mildred just as long as Rosa, and she didn't get nothing but what she asked for, messing around. Nothing happens to people that they didn't ask for."

Mama said, "Well, I am asking you to take me home—that is the sorriest thing you have said all day, and the sun is going down. That

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child won't but twenty years old and she died suffering." She took the box of supper right out of Milo's lap and shut it and said, "Baby Sister, help me fold up this blanket." There was nothing for Sissie and Milo and Wesley to do but get off the blanket and think of heading home.

Rosacoke had taken her seat on a bench by the bath house with her back turned, and Wesley went down that way, not saying if he meant to speak to Rosa—maybe just to change his clothes. When he had gone a little way, Mama called to him, "Wesley, are you going to ease that child?"

"Yes'm," he said. "I'll try."

"Will you bring her home then and not go scaring her with your machine?"

"Yes'm," he said. "I will." And Mama and them left without Milo even putting his trousers on—Sissie carried them over her arm—and whatever last words he wanted to yell at Wesley got stopped by the look in Mama's eye.

ALL Rosacoke was seeing from the bench was pine trees across the lake on a low hill and two mules eating through clover with short slow steps towards each other. Somewhere on top of the hurting, she thought up a rule. "Give two mules a hill to stand on and time to rest and like as not by dark they will end up side by side, maybe eight inches apart from head to tail, facing different ways." It wasn't always true but thinking it filled the time till Wesley came from the shade and stood behind her and put one thick hand over her eyes and thinking he had come like a panther, asked her who it was.

"You are Wesley," she said, "but that doesn't tell me why you act the way you do."

"Because I am Wesley," he said and sat beside her, still in his bathing suit.

The sun was behind the pines and the mules now, shining through their trunks and legs to lay the last red light flat on the empty lake. The light would last another hour, but the heat was lifting already, and Rosacoke saw a breeze beginning in the tails of those two mules. "Here comes a breeze," she said and they both watched it. It worked across the lake—too feeble to mark the water—and played out by ruffling the hem of her dress and parting the curled hair of Wesley's legs.

They were the only people left at the lake except Mr. Mason who owned it. He was on guard in the cool drink stand as hard as if it was noon and the lake was thick with screaming people.

Wesley laid his hand above her knee. "Let's go swimming before it's night."

"What am I going to swim in?—my skin? This dirty dress is all I've got."

"You could rent one over there at the drink stand."

"I wouldn't put on a public bathing suit if I *never* touched water again. Anyway, why are you so anxious about me swimming? I thought you got a bellyfull of underwater sports with Willie Duke."

"No, I didn't," he said and laughed.

"Didn't what?"

"Didn't get a bellyful."

That made her thigh tighten under his hand, and she looked away to keep from answering. So Wesley stood up and waded out to where the water was deep enough to lie down and then swam backwards to the diving board with his head out just enough to keep his eyes on her. It was his finest stroke and she wasn't seeing a bit of it, but when he twisted round and rose and grabbed the ladder to the board—she saw that, him rising up by the strength of his right hand, not using his feet at all, and hitching his red trunks that the water pulled at. (Even the skin below his waist was brown.)

Then he dived one lovely dive after another —not joking now for Milo's sake but serious and careful as if there was a prize to win at sunset—and she watched him (not knowing if that was what he wanted, not being able to help herself). Once she narrowed her eyes to see only him, and once while he rested a minute, she focused on the hill beyond and those two mules that had only a short green space between them now—then Wesley split down through the green with his red suit blurred and silent and too quick to catch.

Before he surfaced, somebody spoke to Rosacoke. "Young lady, what kin is that boy to you?" It was Mr. Mason who owned the lake. He had shut up the cool drink stand and was there by the bench with his felt hat on, hot as it was.

"No kin," Rosacoke said. "I just came with him. We are the left-overs of Delight Church picnic." She looked back to Wesley who was pretending not to notice Mr. Mason. "He has just got out of the Navy—that boy—and looks like he's trying to recall every dive he ever learned."

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"Yes ma'm, it do," Mr. Mason said, "but I wish he won't doing it on my time. I mean, I'm a preacher and I got to go home, and the law says he can't be diving when I ain't watching. He can swim a heap better than me I know —I ain't been under since I was baptised—but you all's church has paid me to lifeguard every one of you, and long as he dives, I got to guard. And I didn't charge but nineteen cents a head for all you Delight folks."

Maybe Wesley was hearing every word—he wasn't *that* far away—but just then he strolled off the end of the board and cut a string of flips in the air as if to show Mr. Mason that *one* somebody was getting his nineteen cents' worth. That time, he stayed under extra long, and when he came up way over on the mule side, Rosacoke said, "Wesley, Mr. Mason has got to go home." Wesley pinched his nostrils and waved Mr. Mason good-bye.

That seemed to please Mr. Mason. He laughed and told Rosacoke, "Lady, I'm going to leave him alone and deputise you a lifeguard. He is your personal responsibility from now on." He took off his hat and took out his watch and said, "It is six-thirty and I am preaching in an hour. What must I preach on, lady?"

"Well, if you don't know by now," she said, "I'm glad I haven't got to listen." But she smiled a little.

And he wasn't offended—"What I mean to say is, you give me your favourite text, and that's what I'll preach on."

Rosacoke said, " 'Then Jesus asked him what is thy name and he said Legion.' "

"Yes, ma'm," he said, "that is a humdinger" (which wasn't the same as committing himself to use it). Then he said he felt sure they had enjoyed their day and to come back any time it was hot and he left.

So Rosacoke and Wesley were there alone with nothing else breathing even but those two mules and what few birds were hidden on the hill that sang again in the cool and whatever it was that sent up those few bubbles there from the deepest bottom of the lake. There was an acre or more of water between them (Wesley was still on the mule side, up to his waist), but they saw each other clear. They had had little separate seeings all day—his sight of her at the church that threw his mind to all those Norfolk women and her seeing him out the window, rubbing his machine or stroking through the bushes to the spring or vanishing under the lake with Willie Duke Aycock in his hands—but this was the first time they had both looked, together. Wesley had his own reasons, and she had hers and both of them wondered was there a reason to move on now past looking—to something else.

Wesley found a reason first. "Rosa," he called and the name spread flat on the lake and came to her loud, "have you got anything I can drink?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm thirsty."

"Well, you are standing in several thousand gallons of spring water."

He took that as a joke and lay down and swam straight towards her over the lake that had been brown in the sun but was green with the sun gone down—the water flat green and pieces of bright plant the swimmers stirred up ragged on the surface and Wesley's arms pale green when they cut the water and his whole body for a moment green when he walked up the narrow sand and stood by the bench and looked again. She smiled, not knowing why, and turned away. Her hair had darkened like the water and, turning, it fell across her shoulder in slow water curves down the skin of her white neck to the groove along her back that was damp. He saw that. She said, "The drink stand is closed." He nodded and walked off to the bath house, and she figured they were going home now so she walked back to the pine shade and got her shoes that Mama had brushed and left there and went down to the motor-cycle and stood. Wesley came out with nothing on but his shirt over his red trunks and no sign of trousers anywhere.

"Who stole your trousers?" she asked.

He didn't answer that. He just said, "Come here" and waved her to him. There was nothing to do but go, and when she got there he took her hand and started off around the lake away from the motor-cycle.

"Aren't we going home?" she asked. "I mean, Mr. Mason has shut it up and all—maybe we ought to go."

"Maybe I can find some drinking water up in them trees," he said.

"Wesley, there is plenty of drinking water at every service station between here and home. Why have we got to go tearing through some strange somebody's bushes? I have had plenty of that already to-day."

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"Hush up, Rosa," he said. She hushed and he held up the barbed wire, and she crawled under on to the hill with the mules. One yellow hair of hers caught in the wire, and Wesley took it and wrapped it round his finger.

"Is that mine?" she asked, stroking her head.

"It's mine now."

"Well, you can have it. The sun has bleached me out till I look like a hussy."

"What do you know about a hussy?"

"I know you don't have to go to Norfolk, Virginia, to find one."

"What do you mean?"

"You know who I mean."

"If it's Willie Duke Aycock you mean—she will be in Norfolk to-morrow along with them other hussies you mentioned."

That was like a glass of ice water thrown on her, but she held back and only said, "What is she going up there for?"—thinking it was just a shopping trip to buy some of those clothes that nobody but Willie Duke wore.

"She's got a job."

"Doing what?"

"Curling hair."

"What does she know about curling hair with that mess *she's* got?"

"I don't know but she's moving up, bag and baggage."

"What was she asking you about then?"

"She wanted to know would I ride her up."

Rosacoke took her hand out of his. "On that motor-cycle?"

"Yes."

"Then she is crazier than I thought she was"—they were still climbing the hill all this time, looking ahead to where the trees began—"Are you taking her?"

"I don't know yet."

"When will you know?"

"By the time I'm home to-night." He took her hand again to show that was all he was saying about Willie Duke and to lead her into the trees.

THEY walked through briars and switches of trees and poison oak (and Wesley bare to every danger from the hip down) with their eyes to the ground as if a deep well of water might open at their feet any minute. But when the trees were thick enough to make it dark and when, looking back, she couldn't see the mules, Rosacoke said, "Wesley, you and me both are going to catch poison oak which Milo would never stop laughing at, and you aren't going to find any water before night."

"Maybe it ain't water I'm looking for," he said.

"I don't notice any gold dust lying around so what are you hunting?"

There was an oak tree on Wesley's right that was bare around the roots, and he took her there and sat down in a little low grass. She clung to his hand but stayed on her feet and said, "Night will come and catch us here, and we will get scratched to pieces stumbling out." But the light that filtered through the trees fell on Wesley's face, and when she studied him again—him looking up at her serious as if he was George Washington and had never smiled—and when he pulled once more on her hand, she sat down with him. A piece of her white dress settled over his brown legs and covered the pouting little mouth where the leech had been, and she asked him something she had wondered all afternoon—"How come you are so brown even under the belt of your bathing suit?"

He folded his suit back to the danger point and said, "From skinny-dipping."

"You never told me what that is."

"It's swimming naked."

"Where?"

"Anywhere you can find a private beach and somebody to swim with you."

"Who do you find?"

"People ain't hard to find."

"Women you mean?"

"Ain't you asked your share of questions?" he said and lifted up her hair and hid under it long enough to kiss her neck.

She drew back a little, finally sick from all the afternoon, and said, "Wesley, I am sorry and I know it maybe isn't none of my business, but I have sat in Afton on my behind for the best part of three years making up questions I *needed* to hear you answer, and here you are answering me like I was a doll baby that didn't need nothing but a nipple in her mouth."

He didn't speak and when she turned to him, he was just looking at his feet that were almost gone in the dark. For a while the only noise was a whippoorwill starting up for the night, but Rosacoke watched Wesley through that silence, thinking if he looked up, she would know all she needed, but he didn't look up, and she said something she had practised over and over for a time like this—"There are some people that look you in the eyes every second they are with

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you like you were in a building with some windows dark and some windows lit, and they had to look in every window hard to find out where you were. Wesley, I have got more from *hitchhikers* than I have from you—just old men with cardboard suitcases and cold, tough wrists showing at the end of their sleeves, flagging down rides in the dust, shy like they didn't have the right to ask you for air to breathe, much less a ride, and I would pass them in a bus maybe, and they would look up, and maybe it wasn't me they were looking at, but I'd think it was and I'd get more from them in three seconds than you have given me in three whole years."

He didn't even answer that. He hadn't seen that every question she asked was aimed for the one she couldn't ask, which was did he love her or didn't he, and if he did, what about those women Milo mentioned and he didn't deny, and if he didn't, why had he kept her going this many years and why was he riding her up and down on a brand-new motor-cycle and why did he have her under this tree, maybe miles from drinking water and the night coming down?

He didn't answer but when she was quiet he commenced to show her why. For a while he did what he generally did around her face and lips and her white neck. And she let him go till he took heart and moved to what was underneath, trying for what he had never tried before. Then with her hand she held him back and said, "Is that all you want out of me?"

"That's right much," he said. And if he had let her think a minute and look, he might have won, but he said one more thing. "If you are thinking about Mildred's trouble, you ain't got that to worry about. You'll be all right. That's why I left the funeral—to go home and get what will make it all right for me and you."

"No, Wesley," she said. Then she said, "It is nearly dark," and stood up and asked him to take her home.

"Rosa," he said, "you know I'm going to Norfolk again. You *know* that don't you?"

"I know that," she said. She took a step to leave.

". . . And that maybe I'm riding Willie Duke up there?"

"Wesley, you can ride Willie Duke to Africa and back if she's what you're looking for. Just make sure she don't have Mildred's trouble."

So Wesley gave up and followed her out of the woods—her leading because she had on shoes and could cut the path—and when they got to the hill, it was almost night. All they could see was the mules outlined against the lake below, resting now and as close as Rosacoke guessed they would be. Wesley saw them and said, "Congratulations, mules."

At the bath house Rosacoke kept going to the cycle, and Wesley turned in to put on his trousers. But there were no lights in there, and Rosacoke could see up at the eaves the glow he made with a match or two before he stamped his foot and came towards the cycle with his trousers and boots in his arms. She said, "Do you mean to ride home naked?"

"Hell, no," he said, "but I ain't hopping around another minute in yonder where it's dark and snaky." He switched on the headlight and stood in its narrow beam and stepped out of that red suit into his trousers with nothing but a flapping shirt tail to hide him. Rosacoke turned her face though he didn't ask her to.

Then not stopping once he took her home round twenty miles of deadly curves hard as he could, and she held him tight to save her life. When they were almost there she squeezed for him to slow down and said to stop on the road and not turn in as Mama might be in bed. He did that much—stopped where she said under a great cherry tree and turned off the noise and raised his goggles and waited for her to do the talking or the moving. She got down and took what was hers in the saddle bags and seeing the house was all dark but one door light the moths beat on, she asked him to shine his light to the door so she could see her way. He did that too and she walked down the beam a yard or so before she turned and tried to say what needed saying. "Wesley——"

"What?" he said—but from behind the light where she couldn't see.

And what she couldn't see, she wasn't speaking to—"Have a good trip."

"All right," he said and she walked on to the house and, at the porch, stood under the light and waved with her hat to show she was safe. For a minute there was no noise but rain frogs singing out behind the creek. Then the cycle roared and the light turned back to the road and he was gone.

Rosacoke wondered would she ever sleep.

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Michael Polanyi

Beyond Nihilism

WE ARE told that moral improvement has not kept pace with the advances of science, and that the troubles of our age are largely due to this disparity. I shall argue that this view is false, or at least profoundly misleading. For I believe that never in the history of mankind has the hunger for brotherhood and righteousness exercised such power over the minds of men as to-day. The past two centuries have not been an age of moral weakness, but have, on the contrary, seen the outbreak of a moral fervour which has achieved numberless humanitarian reforms and has improved modern society beyond the boldest thoughts of earlier centuries. And I believe that it is this fervour which, in our own lifetime, has outreached itself by its inordinate aspirations and thus heaped on mankind the disasters that have befallen us. I admit that these disasters were accompanied by moral depravation. But I deny that this justifies us in speaking of moral retardation. What sluggish river has ever broken the dams which contained it, or smashed the wheels which harnessed it? We have yet to discover the proper terms for describing this event. Ethics must catch up with the pathological forms of morals due to the modern intensification of morality. We must learn to recognise moral excesses.

I shall suggest that modern nihilism is a moral excess from which we are suffering to-day. And I shall try to look past this stage and see whether there is in fact anything beyond it. For our passion for nihilistic self-doubt may be incurable, and it may come to an end only when it has finally destroyed our civilisation.

TO SPEAK OF MORAL PASSIONS is something new. Writers on ethics, both ancient and modern, have defined morality as a composed state of mind. The great spiritual elevation of the 5th century B.C. established throughout its immense area—in China, India, and Greece—a picture of moral man achieving serenity by curbing his passions. It is true that Greek thought has already discussed to what extent moral happiness may be flavoured by a calm enjoyment of the senses. The union of pleasure and morality has been a recurrent theme of ethical speculations down to modern times. But modern nihilism is not a form of moral laxity and it can be understood, on the contrary, only as part of a comprehensive moral protest that is without precedent in history. So novel is the present state of morality that it has been overlooked by all writers on ethics. The idea that morality consists in imposing on ourselves the curb of moral commands is so ingrained in us, that we simply cannot see that the moral need of our time is, on the contrary, to curb our inordinate moral demands, which precipitate us into moral degradation, and threaten us with bodily destruction.

There is, admittedly, one ancient record of moral admonitions which were outbreaks of moral passion: the sermons of the Hebrew prophets. I might have disregarded these since their fulminations were fired by religious zeal and the religious zeal of Judeo-Christianity is not primarily moral. But these prophetic utterances are relevant here because their Messianism, reinforced by the apocalyptic messages of the New Testament, gave rise in the Middle Ages and after to a series of chiliastic outbursts in which the inversion of moral passions into nihilism has made its first appearance.

This has been followed up recently by Norman Cohn in *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. He shows that the initial impetus to the repeated Messianic rebellions, which occurred in Central Europe from the 11th to the 16th centuries, was given by the great moral reforms of Gregory VII. His violent resolve to purge the Church of simony, to prohibit the marriage of the clergy and enforce their chastity retrieved the Church from imminent decay, but it did so at the cost of inciting the populace to rebellion

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against the clergy. These rebellions were both religious and moral. Their master ideas could be conceived only in a Christian society, for they assailed the spiritual rulers of society for offending against their own teachings. Rulers who did not preach Christian ideals could not be attacked in these terms.

Since no society can live up to Christian precepts, any society professing Christian precepts must be afflicted by an internal contradiction, and when the tension is released by rebellion its agents must tend to establish a nihilist Messianic rule. For a victorious rising will create a new centre of power, and as the rising had been motivated by Christian morality, the new centre will be beset by the same contradictions against which its supporters had risen in rebellion. It will, indeed, be in a worse position, for its internal balance will not be protected by any customary compromise. It can then hold on only by proclaiming itself to be the absolute good: a Second Coming greater than the first and placed therefore beyond good and evil. We see arising then the "moral superman," whom Norman Cohn compares with the "armed bohemians" of our days, the followers of Bakunin and Nietzsche. For the first time the excesses of Christian morality turned here into fierce immoralism.

But these events were but scattered prodromal signs. The full power of the disturbance which had caused them became manifest only after the secularisation of Europe in the 18th century. This change was neither sudden nor complete: but secularisation was broadly completed in half a century. It was decisively advanced by the new scientific outlook; the victory of Voltaire over Bossuet was the triumph of Newton, even though Newton might not have wanted it. The scientific revolution supplied the supreme axiom of 18th-century rationalism, the rejection of all authority; *"Nullius in Verba"* had been the motto of the Royal Society at its foundation in 1660. Science served also as a major example for emancipating knowledge from religious dogma.

The new world view was expected to set man free to follow the natural light of reason, and thus to put an end to religious fanaticism and bigotry which were deemed the worst misfortunes of mankind. Humanity would advance then peacefully towards ever higher intellectual, moral, political, and economic perfection. But already quite early in the development of this perspective—almost forty years before universal progress was first envisaged by Condorcet—Rousseau had challenged its hopes in his *Discourses on the Arts and Sciences* (1750) and *On Inequality* (1754). He declared that civilised man was morally degenerate, for he lived only outside himself, by the good opinion of others. He was a "hollow man," an "other-directed person," to use terms which were given currency two centuries later. Rousseau actually attributed this degeneration "to the progress of the human mind," which had produced inequalities and consolidated them by the establishment of property. Man's original virtue had thus been corrupted and his person enslaved. Here is moral fury attacking all that is of good repute: all accepted manners, custom, and law; exalting instead a golden age which was before good and evil.

Admittedly, his fervent dedication of the *Discourse on Inequality* to the city of Geneva shows that Rousseau's text was vastly hyperbolic. Yet by his argument and rhetoric he poured into the channels of rationalism a fierce passion for humanity. His thought so widened these channels that they could be fraught eventually with all the supreme hopes of Christianity, the hopes which rationalism had released from their dogmatic framework. But for this infusion of Christian fervour, Voltaire's vision of mankind purged of its follies and settling down to cultivate its garden might have come true; and Gibbon's nostalgia for a civilisation restored to its antique dispassion might have been satisfied. However, the legacy of Christ blighted these complacent hopes; it had other tasks in store for humanity. So it came that the *philosophes* not only failed to establish an age of quiet enjoyment, but induced instead a violent tide of secular dynamism. And that while this tide was to spread many benefits on humanity, nobler than any that the *philosophes* had ever aimed at, it also degenerated in many places into a fanaticism fiercer than the religious furies which their teachings had appeased. So even before the principles of scientific rationalism had been fully formulated, Rousseau had conjured up the extrapolation of these principles to the kind of secular fanaticism which was actually to result from them.

And he went further. Having anticipated the passions of the European revolution without himself intending any revolution, he anticipated even its sequel which was never intended—and indeed abhorred—by most of those who were to become its actual agents. He realised that an

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aggregate of unbridled individuals could form only a totally collectivised political body. For such individuals could be governed only by their own wills and any governmental will formed and justified by them would itself necessarily be unbridled. Such a government could not submit to a superior jurisdiction any conflict arising between itself and its citizens.[1] This argument is the same which led Hobbes to justify an absolutist government on the grounds of an unbridled individualism, and the procedure Rousseau suggested for establishing this absolutism was also the same as postulated by Hobbes. It was construed as a free gift of all individual wills to the will of the sovereign, under the seal of a Social Contract, the sovereign being established in both cases as the sole arbiter of the contract between the citizens and itself.

The congruence between the conclusions derived from an absolute individualism, both by Hobbes who had set out to justify absolutism and Rousseau who hoped to vindicate liberty, testifies to the logical cogency of their argument. It suggests that when revolutions demanding total individual liberty were to lead to the establishment of a collectivist absolutism, these logical implications were actually at work in the process.

MEANWHILE this logic was still only on paper, and even on paper the tyrannical consequences of his position were sometimes vigorously denied by Rousseau himself. The predominant opinion of the Enlightenment certainly opposed both the premises and the conclusions of Rousseau, and continued confidently to pursue the prospect of free and reasonable men in search of individual happiness, under a government to which they would grant only enough power to protect the citizens from encroachments by their fellow citizens or by foreign enemies. The logic of Hobbes and Rousseau was suspended by disregarding the question as to who would arbitrate between the government and the citizens. Fascinated by the examples of British parliamentary government, political philosophy was ready to accept the current maxims of British success. It was not Rousseau but Locke, therefore, whose teachings triumphed in the first revolution, which was to be American and not French. And it was still Locke whose diction prevailed in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* at the beginning of the French Revolution.

[1] Rousseau, *Le Contrat Social* (I, Ch. VI).

By that time, however, the secularisation of the most active minds of Europe and America had advanced nearly to completion and the rising stream of Christian aspirations, merging from its shattered dogmatic precincts, was effectively entering the field of public life. The French Revolution and the collateral movements of reform in all the countries of Europe brought to an end a political state common to mankind for a hundred thousand years from the beginnings of human society. All during these immemorial ages—throughout their myriad tribes and numerous civilisations—men had accepted existing custom and law as the foundation of society. There had been great reforms, but never before had the deliberate contriving of unlimited social improvement been elevated to a dominant principle. The French Revolution marks the dividing line between the immense expanse of essentially static societies and the narrow strip of time over which our modern experience of social dynamism has so far extended.

Little indeed did the great rationalists realise the transformation they were engendering. Voltaire wrote that not all the works of philosophers would cause even as much strife as the quarrel about the length of sleeves to be worn by Franciscan friars. He did not suspect that the spirit of St. Francis himself would enter into the teachings of the philosophers and set the world ablaze with their arguments. And even remoter beyond his horizon lay the fact that rationalism, thus inflamed, would transform the emotional personality of man. Yet this is what followed. Man's consciousness of himself as a sovereign individual evoked that comprehensive movement of thought and feeling now known as romanticism. Of this great and fruitful germination I pick out only the strand which leads on from Rousseau's exaltation of uncivilised man who, like Adam and Eve before the Fall, has yet no knowledge of good and evil. The scorn which Rousseau had poured on all existing society presently found vent in his defiant assertion of his own individuality. His *Confessions* were to show a man in the starkness of nature, and that man would be himself, whom no other man resembles. His lowest vices would be exposed and thrown as a gauntlet at the face of the world. The reader shall judge, wrote he, "whether nature was right in smashing the mould into which she had cast me."

This is modern immoralism. Rascals had written their lives before and had shamelessly told of their exploits. The wrong-doings which

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a Benvenuto Cellini or a Boswell related exceed those of Rousseau, and their authors showed no compunction. Yet they were not immoralists. For they did not proclaim their vices to the world in order to denounce the world's hypocrisy —but merely told a good story.

True, sceptical rationalism had already spread a philosophy of pleasure. Mme de Châtelet wrote that men set free from prejudices should seek no other purpose in life than to enjoy agreeable sensations; and she acted on this principle. But enlightened libertinism envisaged men pursuing pleasure peacefully within the limits of natural morality. Rousseau's prophetic temper transmuted this hedonism into an angry protest against society and flaunted immoral individuality in contemptuous defiance of society.

THERE had been periods of moral scepticism in antiquity. The angry young men of Greece had said that the law is but "the will of the stronger." And in Greece too, secularism and critical analysis may have stimulated this view and have contributed also to the immoralism of Alcibiades and his like-minded contemporaries. But this immoralism was not romantic, for it was not proclaimed in protest against the moral shallowness of society.

Likewise, when Thucydides acknowledged that national interests overrule moral standards in dealing between city states, he declared this as a bitter truth. Machiavelli reasserted this teaching and expanded it by authorising the prince to override all moral constraints in consolidating his own power. And later, Machiavellism was to develop into the doctrine of *Staatsraison*, exercising a steady influence on modern rulers and contributing greatly to the formation of modern states. This *Realpolitik* culminated in the writings, actions, and achievements of Frederick the Great, but still lacked romantic colour. For it still justified itself as a regrettable necessity.

But romantic dynamism transformed this tight-lipped immorality of princes into the exaltation of nationhood as a law unto itself. The uniqueness of great nations gave them now the right to unlimited development at the expense of their weaker neighbours. Such national immoralism developed furthest in Germany and was upheld there with a strong feeling of its own moral superiority over the moralising statesmen of other countries. This German attitude duplicated on the national scale Rousseau's flaunting of his uniquely vicious nature against a hypocritical society.

Meanwhile, let me make it clear that I am not concerned with the effect of Rousseau's writings on the course of history. Their effect was considerable, but even had his works been overlooked, the fact would remain that a great thinker anticipated in three respects the inherent instability of the rationalist ideal of a secular society. He saw that it implied an unrestrained individualism, demanding absolute freedom and equality far beyond the limits imposed by any existing society. He saw, next, that such absolute sovereignty of individual citizens is conceivable within society only under a popular government, exercising absolute power. And thirdly, he anticipated the ideal of an amoral individualism, asserting the rights of a unique creative personality against the morality of a discredited society. And though the transposition of romantic immoralism on to the national scale was admittedly strange to Rousseau's cosmopolitan outlook, yet this too was largely prefigured by his thought.

Now that these implications have proved to be paths of history, the fact that they were discerned at a time when no one had yet thought of them as lines of action, strongly suggests that they were in fact the logical consequences of their antecedents: *i.e.*, of a sceptical rationalism combined with the secularised fervour of Christianity. I do not say that these logical consequences were bound to take effect, and I shall show that they have in fact remained unfulfilled in some important areas. But I do suggest that wherever they did come to light during the two centuries after Rousseau, they may be regarded as a manifestation of a logical process which first ran its course in Rousseau's mind.

I HAVE set the scene and introduced the ideas which were to move the past five generations up to the stage which is our own responsibility to-day. I see the course of these 150 years as the rise of moral passions which, though mostly beneficent, sometimes assumed terrible forms, culminating in the revolutions of the 20th century. I see the present generation still reeling under the blows of these moral excesses, groping its way back to the original ideals of the 18th century. But since these have once collapsed under the weight of their logical implications, can they possibly be restored to guide us once more? This is now the question.

I have said that the situation in which the modern mind finds itself to-day has emerged in

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two stages from the mentality of a static society. The first stage was the process of intellectual secularisation, spreading the new scientific outlook of the universe and yet evoking no profound emotions and calling for no vast political actions; the second was the dynamic process which released these emotions and actions. At this point the thoughts of philosophers were transformed into ideologies. Ideologies are fighting creeds. They fought against the defenders of the static age and they also fought against each other, as rivals. Those who speak to-day of "the end of ideologies" mean that dynamism has abated and can move men today therefore without commitment to a theoretical fighting creed.

The effectiveness of dynamic political action, carried on with little ideological guidance, is illustrated by the development of Britain in the first half of the 19th century. The abolition of slavery, the factory laws, the emancipation of non-Conformists and Catholics, the reform of Parliament, the Lunacy Laws, criminal and penal reform and the many other humanitarian improvements, for which this period was named the "Age of Reform," were promoted by people of widely different persuasions. The reforms had their early roots in the sustained struggle against oppression and social injustices which had already found influential advocates in politics for centuries before the Enlightenment. They were not achieved by a secularised anti-clerical movement, but by ancient political forces, quickened by a new zeal for social improvement. With his theory of British political practice, Montesquieu gave an ideology to France; yet in Britain this theory was never an ideology, but a commentary on established forms of life. No one objected, for example, to the fact that Britain's chief executive was responsible to Parliament and that British judges continued to make case-law, although these proceedings infringed the theoretical division of powers. Such was indeed the fate of all political theory in England: it never became more than a set of maxims, subject to interpretation by customary practice. The genius of Hobbes was disregarded, for his teachings were not consonant with practice. Locke was exalted and the gaps of his theory ignored, for practice readily filled these gaps. The views of Bentham, whose paramount influence should in strict logic have resulted in the establishment of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, were reduced in practice to a corrective against rigid traditionalism; while Burke's inordinate traditionalism was quietly assimilated as a mere corrective to the predominance of utilitarianism. Later, J. S. Mill achieved lasting influence with his theories of liberty and representative government which ignored all the questions raised by Hobbes and Rousseau and also by German Idealism; and finally, at the turn of the century, even Hegel was domesticated in T. H. Green's adaptation of his philosophy to British constitutional practice.

Yet dynamism did take deep hold on England. Only it did so piecemeal, by arousing those people whom the established order had wronged and by appealing to the conscience of those responsible for maintaining these injustices. As a result, to-day, after 150 years of reform that have transformed every particle of her life, Britain's institutions still form a single harmonised system, upheld without serious dissent by the entire nation. The "end of ideologies" will signify no more in this case than the termination of a brief period of doctrinaire Socialism.

Thus Britain avoided the self-destructive implications of the Enlightenment of which she was one chief author. Remember David Hume's game of backgammon, to which he turned in disgust over the consequences of his scepticism —it has remained the paradigm of British national life. It preserved down to this day the movement of 18th-century humanism. In America the same result was achieved through a passionate veneration of the constitution. Hence Britain, whose pioneering scepticism was feared by French conservatives in the 18th century, came to be looked upon in the 19th century as old-fashioned by the dynamic intelligentsia of the Continent. I have mentioned already how the German romantics, who denied the relevance of moral standards to the external actions of states, indignantly rejected the moralising talk of English and American statesmen as stupid or dishonest, or both. But German socialists were equally nonplussed by the religious and moral exhortations of British labour leaders. Continental Marxists kept on discussing the curious "backwardness" of English and American politics—even as Communists in Albania to-day are probably wondering how countries like Germany, France, and England could fall so far behind the enlightened example of Albania.

THERE was a similar relationship between England and the Continent also in respect to romantic individualism. Byron had spread the image of the noble romantic immoralist through European literature as far as the Rus-

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sian steppes. The poet Lenski in Pushkin's *Onegin* (1833) has a portrait of Byron in his remote country house. But England itself got rid of Byron without a trace. The problem of evil, the possibility that evil may be morally superior to good, which affected all 19th-century thought on the Continent, was never raised in England. Morley, in his book *On Compromise*, deplores the fact that England's civic genius had restrained the adventures of speculative thought so as to keep them politically innocuous. Had he lived to see our own day, Morley might have felt that England had remained backward only on the road to disaster. Or, perhaps more positively, he would have seen that England—like America—had effectively relaxed the internal contradictions inherent in any Christian or post-Christian society, by gradually humanising society, while strengthening the affection between fellow citizens for the sake of which they may forgive mutual injustices. Because it was this achievement that has preserved the 18th-century framework of thought almost intact in these countries up to this day.

However, in 1789, France broke away and led the world towards a revolutionary consummation of the contradiction inherent in a post-Christian rationalism. The ideology of total revolution is a variant of the derivation of absolutism from absolute individualism. Its argument is simple and has yet to be answered. If society is not a divine institution, it is made by man, and man is free to do with society what he likes. There is then no excuse for having a bad society, and we must make a good one without delay. For this purpose you must take power and you can take power over a bad society only by a revolution; so you must go ahead and make a revolution. Moreover, to achieve a comprehensive improvement of society you need comprehensive powers; so you must regard all resistance to yourself as high treason and must put it down mercilessly.

This logic is, alas, familiar to us, and we can readily identify its more or less complete fulfilment from Robespierre and St. Just to Lenin, Bela Kun, Hitler, and Mao Tse-tung. But there is a progression from Robespierre to his successors *which transforms Messianic violence from a means to an end into an aim in itself*. Such is the final position reached by moral passions in their modern embodiments, whether in personal nihilism or in totalitarian violence. I call this transformation a process of *moral inversion*.

J. L. Talmon's richly documented account of the ideas which moved the French Revolution and filled the revolutionary movements up to about 1848, makes us realise the depth of this transformation and supplies already some signs of its beginnings.[2] Here is the language in which Robespierre addressed his followers:

> But it exists, I assure you, pure and sensitive souls; it exists, that passion, so tender, imperious, irresistible, the torment and joy of generous hearts, that deep horror of tyranny, that compassionate zeal for the oppressed, that sacred love of the fatherland, that sublime and sacred love of humanity, without which a great revolution is but a manifest crime that destroys another crime; it exists, that generous ambition to found on this earth the first Republic of the world; that selfishness of men not degraded, which finds its celestial delight in the calm of a pure conscience and the charming spectacle of the public good. You feel it burning at this very moment in your souls. I feel it in my own.

Yes, it existed, this passion of pure and sensitive souls, this sublime and sacred love of humanity—and it still exists to-day, only it no longer speaks of itself in these terms. Robespierre's text contains some seeds of the more modern terms, when he speaks of that selfishness (*egoisme*) which delights in the public good. This phrase echoes Helvetius' utilitarianism, which would establish the ideals of humanity scientifically, by rooting them in man's desire for pleasure. The next step was to reject humanitarian ideals as such; Bentham contemptuously spoke of natural rights and laws of nature as senseless jargon. "Utility is the supreme object," he wrote, "which comprehends in itself law, virtue, truth, and justice."

We have seen that the logic of Bentham's scientific morality was mercifully suspended and its teachings interpreted in support of liberal reforms in England, but on the Continent we see henceforth the scientific formulation of dynamism entering into ever more effective competition with its original emotional manifestations. Both were revolutionary in scope, and the Utopian phantasies of both bordered on insanity; but as time went on all these inordinate hopes became increasingly assimilated to teachings claiming the authority of science. And the new scientific utopianism declared that the future society must submit absolutely to its scientific rulers; once politics has been elevated to the rank of a natural science, liberty of con-

[2] J. L. Talmon, *The Origin of Totalitarian Democracy* (London, 1952).

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science would disappear.[3] The infallibility of Rousseau's general will was transposed into the unassailable conclusions of a scientific sociology.

ABOUT the same time, personal immoralism that had issued from Rousseau underwent a similar scientific incrustation. It resulted in the character first described by Turgenev as a *nihilist*. The line of romantic immoralists which Pushkin had started in Russia with the Byronian figure of Onegin and of Herman (the Napoleon-struck hero of *The Queen of Spades*), was not discontinued. Raskolnikov develops their problems further, by committing a murder only to test the powers of his immorality. The figure of Raskolnikov was independently recreated by Nietzsche in his tragic apologia of the Pale Criminal in *Zarathustra*, and this figure, with others akin to it, gained popular influence in Germany and France. But not in Russia. The popular ideal of the Russian enlightened youth from about 1860 onwards was the hard, impersonal scientific nihilist, first embodied in Turgenev's hero, the medical student Bazarov.

Men of this type were called "realists," "progressives," or simply "new men." They were strict materialists, who combined their total denial of genuinely moral ideals with a frenzied hatred of society on account of its immorality. Thus they were morally dedicated to commit any act of treachery, blackmail, or cruelty in the service of a programme of universal destruction. On November 21st, 1869, the nihilist leader Nechaev had his follower, the student Ivanov, assassinated in order to strengthen party discipline. This is the story which Dostoievsky has told in *The Possessed*, representing Ivanov by Shatov and Nechaev by Piotr Stepanovitch Werchovenski.

The structure of this crime prefigured the murder by Stalin of his own followers; but there was yet some theoretical support needed. It was supplied by a new scientific sociology claiming to have proved three things: namely (1) that the total destruction of the existing society was the only method for achieving an essential improvement of society; (2) that nothing beyond this act of violence was required, or even to be considered, since it was unscientific to make any plans for the new society; and (3) that no moral restraints must be observed in the revolutionary seizure of power, since (a) this process was historically inevitable, and so beyond human control, and (b) morality, truth, etc., were mere epiphenomena of class-interests so that the only scientific meaning of morality, truth, justice, etc., consisted in advancing those class-interests which science had proved to be ascendant.

This scientific sociology was supplied by Marxism-Leninism. Though said to transform Socialism "from Utopia into a science," its convincing power was due to the satisfaction it gave to the Utopian dreams which it purported to replace. And this proved sufficient. Any factual objection to the theory was repelled as a reactionary attack against Socialism, while Socialism itself was safe from criticism, since any discussion of it had been condemned as unscientific speculation by Marx. Marxism provides a perfect ideology for a moral dynamism which could express itself only in a naturalistic conception of man; this is its historic function.

The generous passions of our age could now covertly explode inside the engines of a pitiless machinery of violence. The pure and sensitive souls to whom Robespierre had appealed still existed, and were indeed more numerous than ever, and his sublime and sacred love of humanity was still burning as intensely as ever. But these sentiments had become *immanent* in policies of *manifest* immorality. Their accents had become scientifically didactic. Here is Lenin's language in the programmatic statement made in June 1917:

> The dictatorship of the proletariat is a scientific term stating the class in question and the particular form of state authority, called dictatorship, namely, authority based not on law, not on elections, but directly on the armed force of some portion of the population.

Robespierre's terror had justified itself by its noble aspirations; Marx refused such justification and said that violence alone must be the aim of a scientific Socialism. This is moral inversion: a condition in which high moral purpose operates only as the hidden force of an openly declared inhumanity.

IN *The Possessed*, the earlier type of *personal* inversion is embodied in Stavrogin, whom the modern *political* immoralist Werchovensky is vainly trying to draw into his conspiratorial organisation. But by the 20th century the two types become convertible into each other throughout Europe. The personal immoralist bohemian converts his anti-bourgeois protest readily into social action by becoming an "armed bohemian" and

[3] See F. A Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science* (1952), particularly his study of Comte.

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thus supporting absolute violence as the only honest mode of political action.

The two lines of anti-nomianism meet and mingle in French existentialism. Mme de Beauvoir hails the Marquis de Sade as a great moralist[4] when Sade declares through one of his characters: ". . . I have destroyed everything in my heart that might have interfered with my pleasures." And this triumph over conscience, as she calls it, is interpreted in terms of her own Marxism: ". . . Sade passionately exposes the bourgeois hoax which consists in erecting class-interests into universal (moral) principles."

I have said before that romanticism recognised the extension of national power as a nation's supreme right and duty. This political immoralism is also a moral inversion, akin to the personal immoralism of the romantic school. Meinecke has shown that German *Realpolitik*, the identification of Might and Right in international relations, was the ultimate outcome of the Hegelian teaching of "immanent reason." The strength of immanent morality is proved by the violence of manifest immorality. This, Meinecke thinks, is the grim truth blandly overlooked or hypocritically papered over by moralising statesmen and English-speaking people in general. He admitted that the knowledge of this truth tended to brutalise its holders, but thought that the English-speaking people had avoided this depravation only by turning a blind eye on the disparity between their teachings and their actions.

A great wave of anti-bourgeois immoralism sweeping through the minds of German youth in the inter-war period, formed the reservoir from which the SA and SS were recruited. They were inspired by the same truculent honesty and passion for moral sacrifice which turned the nihilists of Russia, whether romantic or scientistic, into the *apparatchiks* of Stalinism.

People often speak of Communism or Nazism as a "secular religion." But not all fanaticism is religious. The passions of the total revolution and total wars which have devastated our age were not religious but moral. Their morality was inverted and became immanent in brute force because a naturalistic view of man forced them into this manifestation. Once they are immanent, moral motives no longer speak in their own voice, and are no longer accessible to moral arguments; such is the structure of modern nihilistic fanaticism.

HERE, then, is my diagnosis of the pathological morality of our time. What chance is there of remedying this condition?

The healer's art must rely ultimately on the patient's natural powers for recovery. We have unmistakable evidence of these powers in our case. From its origins in the French Revolution the great tide of dynamism had been mounting steadily, both spreading its benefits and causing its pathological perversions, during roughly 150 years; and then—at the very centre of revolutionary dynamism—the tide turned. Pasternak dates the change in Russia around 1943. It arose in an upsurge of national feeling. Hatred of Stalin gave way to the resolve of conquering Hitler in spite of Stalin. Victory was in sight, and with this prospect came the growing realisation that the existing system of fanatical hatreds, lies, and cruelties was in fact pointless. Intimations of freedom began to spread. These thoughts repudiated the core of Messianic immoralism and for a moment broke its magic. A process of sobering had set in. In 1948 Tito defected from Stalin, invoking truth and national dignity as principles superior to party discipline.

The decline of ideological dynamism set in also on this side of the Iron Curtain. In England, in Germany, and in Austria, the change of heart was noticeable from the early 1950's. Socialists who, even in notoriously reformist countries like Britain, had demanded a complete transformation of society, began to re-interpret their principles everywhere in terms of piecemeal progress.

Finally, the events following the death of Stalin (1953) clearly revealed that a system based on a total inversion of morality was intrinsically unstable. The first act of Stalin's successors was to release the thirteen doctors of the Kremlin, who had quite recently been sentenced to death on their own confession of murderous attempts against the life of Stalin and other members of the government. This action had a shattering effect on the Party. A young man who at that time was a fervent supporter of Stalinism in Hungary described to me how he felt when the news came through on the wireless. It seemed as if the motion picture of his whole political development had started running off backwards. If party-truth was now to be refuted by mere bourgeois objectivity, then Stalin's whole fictitious universe would presently dissolve and so

[4] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Marquis de Sade* (1953), p. 55. "Owing to his headstrong sincerity . . . he deserves to be hailed as a great moralist."

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the loyalty which sustained this fiction—and was in its turn sustained by it—would be destroyed as well.

The alarm was justified. For it is clear by now that the new masters of the Kremlin had acted as they did because they believed their position would be safer if they had more of the truth on their side and less against them. So deciding, they had acknowledged the power of the truth over the Party and the existence of an independent ground for opposition against the Party. And this independent ground—this new Mount Ararat laid bare by the receding flood of dynamism—was bound to expand rapidly. For if truth was no longer defined as that which serves the interests of the Party, neither would art, morality, or justice continue to be so defined, since all these hang closely together—as it has eventually become clearly apparent.

So it came to pass that the whole system of moral inversion broke down in the Hungarian and Polish risings of 1956. These movements were originally not rebellions against the Communists, but a change of mind of leading Communists. The Hungarian rising not only started, but went a long way towards victory, as a mere revulsion of Communist intellectuals from their earlier convictions. The first revolutionary event was the meeting of a literary circle, the Petöfi Society, on June 27th, 1956. An audience of about six thousand, overflowing into the streets to which the proceedings were transmitted by loudspeakers, met for nine hours. Speaker after speaker demanded freedom to write the truth; to write about real people, real streets and fields, real sentiments and problems; to report truthfully on current events and on matters of history. In making these demands many speakers were reverting to beliefs they had previously abhorred and even violently suppressed.

In the months that followed these re-born principles worked their way rapidly further, frequently bursting out in self-accusations by Communist intellectuals who repented their previous connivance in reducing truth, justice, and morality, to mere instruments of the Party.

Miklos Gimes, a leading Communist who was hanged by Kadar for his part in the Hungarian Revolution, wrote in this sense in *Béke és Szabadság* on October 3rd, 1956. He asked how it could have happened that he himself had become unable to see the difference between truth and falsehood.

> Slowly we had come to believe, at least with the greater, the dominant part of our consciousness, that there are two kinds of truth, that the truth of the Party and the people can be different and can be more important than the objective truth and that truth and political expediency are in fact identical. This is a terrible thought, yet its significance must be faced squarely. If there is a truth of a higher order than objective truth, if the criterion of truth is political expediency, then even a lie can be "true," for even a lie can be momentarily expedient; even a trumped-up political trial can be "true" in this sense for even such a trial can yield important political advantage. And so we arrive at the outlook which infected not only those who thought up the faked political trials but often affected even the victims; the outlook which poisoned our whole public life, penetrated the remotest corners of our thinking, obscured our vision, paralysed our critical faculties, and finally rendered many of us incapable of simply sensing or apprehending truth. This is how it was, it is no use denying it.

Thus had the decision matured which Gyula Hay, since then imprisoned by Kadar, declared on September 22nd in *Irodalmi Ujság*:

> The best Communist writers have resolved—after many difficulties, serious errors, and bitter mental struggles—that in no circumstances will they ever write lies again.

Hay realised that on these grounds all writers, both inside and outside the Party, were now reunited. In a speech made on September 17th he declared:

> We Hungarian writers, irrespective of party allegiance or philosophic convictions, form hereby a firm alliance for the dissemination of the truth.

It was this alliance which lent its voice to the hitherto mute and powerless dissatisfaction of the workers. When the students marched into the streets to hold their forbidden demonstration, tens of thousands streamed from the factories to join them. Within hours the army had changed camp, the secret police was dissolved. The heavily armed and severely disciplined organisation of a totalitarian state evaporated overnight, because its convictions had been consumed by its own newly-awakened conscience.

This upsurge of truth resembled up to a point the Enlightenment of the 18th century, but it differed from it profoundly. For the Encyclopædists were not repudiating a string of lies which they had deliberately swallowed, in order to strengthen their own political convictions. There was no occasion for them to restore a belief in truth and morality, which had never been questioned by the orthodoxy they were

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attacking, nor ever been scorned by themselves.

By contrast, the process of the Communist revulsion has been dramatically told by the Polish poet Adam Waczek, himself a Party stalwart, in his *Poem for Adults*, written a year before the events in Hungary started. Fourier had promised that Socialism would turn the seas into lemonade, and so the Party members had eagerly swallowed sea water as if it were lemonade. But eventually their stomachs turned and from time to time they had to retire and vomit. The word "vomiting" has since become a technical term for describing the recoil of morally inverted man: the act by which he violently turns himself right way up. A new term was needed, because nothing of this kind had ever happened before.

THE Hungarian Revolution is the paradigm of an intellectual movement which, in less dramatic forms, has spread all through the area of receding dynamism, almost everywhere outside Communist China. The Soviet Government has condemned its manifestation within its own domain as revisionism, and I think the name "revisionism" may be applied to the different forms of this movement everywhere.

Revisionism recoils from a negation. The negation took place when the Enlightenment, having secularised Christian hopes, destroyed itself by moral inversion; and the recoil from this negation occurred when moral inversion proved unstable in its turn. This recoil is the source of all revisionism.

But, unfortunately, to recognise these antecedents is to call in question all the ideas which have hitherto guided revisionist movements. A re-awakened national feeling has been one of these ideas. Pasternak tells us how it humanised the Soviet régime during the war; it has then served the restoration of humane ideals in Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia; and it has formed new bonds of civility in France under de Gaulle. And perhaps above all, it has rejuvenated the ancient societies of Asia and Africa, creating, along with much wasteful strife, new popular communities which transcend the ideological conflicts of European dynamism.

Another revisionist idea lay in the new-found alliance between liberalism and religious beliefs. The churches seemed to recall modern man from a state beyond nihilism to his condition before the secular enlightenment. And finally, the sceptical mood of the Enlightenment itself has been given a new lease of life. The more sober, pragmatist attitude towards public affairs which has spread since 1950 through England and America, Germany and Austria, reproduces in its repudiation of ideological strife the attitude of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists towards religious bigotry.

But revision cannot succeed by merely returning to ideas which have already proved unstable. The rule of a dogmatic authority is no more acceptable to-day than it was in the days of Voltaire. We shall not go back on the scientific revolution which has secularised extensive domains of knowledge. We shall not go back either on the hopes of Christianity and become as calmly indifferent to social wrongs as secularised antiquity had been. And national feeling has proved in the past no safeguard against the descent of dynamism into moral inversion. In fact, *all the logical antecedents of inversion are present to-day just as they were before*. Can the very channels which had previously led into moral inversion now offer a retreat from it?

All the same, we *have* arrived beyond nihilism to-day, even though the place at which we have arrived is similar to that where we stood before it and cannot foresee the creative possibilities by which men may discover an avenue which will not lead back to nihilism. But one possibility should be mentioned. Perhaps the present recoil may be stabilised by the upsurge of a more clear-sighted political conscience. We might conceivably achieve a kind of suspended logic, like that which kept England and America so happily backward on the road to disaster, and indeed this might come about the way it had in England. The religious wars of Europe reached this country in mid-17th century and strife tore England for many years. One king was beheaded, another deposed. But the settlement of 1688, the Petition of Rights, the doctrine of John Locke, have put an end to this conflict and established, for the first time since the rise of Christianity, the foundations of a secular society. Civility prevailed over religious strife and a society was founded which was dynamic and yet united. May not Europe repeat this feat? May we not learn from the disasters of the past forty years to establish a civic partnership, united in its resolve on continuous reforms—our dynamism restrained by the knowledge that radicalism will throw us back into disaster the moment we try to act out its principles literally?

It may happen. But this is hardly a legitimate field for speculation; for from here onwards, thought must take on the form of action.

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Two Poems by Ted Hughes

An Otter

I

Underwater eyes, an eel's
Oil of water body, neither fish nor beast is the otter:
Four-legged yet water-gifted, to outfish fish;
With webbed feet and long ruddering tail
And a round head like an old tomcat.

Brings the legend of himself
From before wars or burials, in spite of hounds and vermin-poles;
Does not take root like the badger. Wanders, cries;
Gallops along land he no longer belongs to;
Re-enters the water by melting.

Of neither water nor land. Seeking
Some world lost when first he dived, that he cannot come at since,
Takes his changed body into the holes of lakes;
As if blind, cleaves the stream's push till he licks
The pebbles of the source. From sea

To sea crosses in three nights
Like a king in hiding. Crying to the old shape of the starlit land,
Over the sunken farms where the bats go round,
Without answer. Till light and birdsong come
Walloping up roads with the milk wagon.

II

Now the hunt's lost him. Pads on mud
Among sedges, nostrils a surface bead,
The otter remains, hours. The air,
Circling the globe, tainted and necessary,

Mingling tobacco-smoke, hounds and parsley,
Comes carefully to the sunk lungs.
So the self under the eye lies,
Attendant and withdrawn. The otter belongs

In double robbery and concealment—
From water that nourishes and drowns, and from land
That gave him his length and the mouth of the hound
He keeps fat in the limpid integument

Reflections live on. The heart beats thick,
Big trout muscle out of the dead cold:
Blood is the belly of logic and he will lick
The fishbone bare. And can take stolen hold

On a bitch otter in a field full
Of nervous horses, but linger nowhere.
Yanked above hounds, reverts to nothing at all,
To this long pelt over the back of a chair.

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Pike

Pike, three inches long, perfect
Pike in all parts, green tigering the gold.
Killers from the egg: the malevolent aged grin.
They dance on the surface among the flies.

Or move, stunned by their own grandeur,
Over a bed of emerald, silhouette
Of submarine delicacy and horror.
A hundred feet long in their world.

In ponds, under the heat-struck lily pads—
Gloom of their stillness:
Logged on last year's black leaves, watching upwards.
Or hung in an amber cavern of weeds

The jaws' hooked clamp and fangs
Not to be changed at this date;
A life subdued to its instrument;
The gills kneading quietly, and the pectorals.

Three we kept behind glass,
Jungled in weed: three inches, four,
And four and a half: fed fry to them—
Suddenly there were two. Finally one

With a sag belly and the grin it was born with.
And indeed they spare nobody
Two, six pounds each, over two feet,
High and dry and dead in the willow-herb—

One jammed past its gills down the other's gullet:
The outside eye stared: as a vice locks—
The same iron in this eye
Though its film shrank in death.

A pond I fished, fifty yards across,
Whose lilies and muscular tench
Had outlasted every visible stone
Of the monastery that planted them—

Stilled legendary depth:
It was as deep as England. It held
Pike too immense to stir, so immense and old
That past nightfall I dared not cast

But silently cast and fished
With the hair frozen on my head
For what might move, for what eye might move.
The still splashes on the dark pond,

Owls hushing the floating woods
Frail on my ear against the dream
Darkness beneath night's darkness had freed,
That rose slowly towards me, watching.

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A Conversation with George Kennan

By MELVIN J. LASKY

THERE has been much recent discussion of the possibility of a slow change in the development of Soviet aims and goals towards something approaching more Western ideals and perhaps even Western methods. I wonder whether in your own professional field—diplomatic history—your experiences also lead you to that conclusion. Are Soviet historians working towards an ideal of greater truth in historical writing? What have their reactions been to your own two formidable volumes in the field of Russian history?

KENNAN: One certainly could not say any such thing about official Soviet historiography. In recent years the "ideological section" of the Central Committee in Moscow appears to have been in the hands of people who hold the most violent prejudices of the Stalin era. These are people who consider the fund of historical knowledge not something which we study with a view to trying to determine what is true and what is not true, what really happened and what didn't happen, but rather as a sort of a great tremendous jack-pot, out of which you select whatever fact you need at the moment to bolster up a propaganda thesis. I must say that in all the record of modern tendentiousness, I have never seen anything as extreme as the recent official Russian historiography dealing with anything that concerns the Soviet Union itself. When I read this material, I can only conclude either that these people (and the Communist Party in Russia) are utterly unable to take any realistic account of the nature of Soviet power and of its experiences in the past; or else they know very well what the facts have been, and are terribly frightened that other people should learn of them. They make an extraordinary effort—an effort that sometimes seems almost to border on abnormality—to distort the past and to build up the image of a mistreated, innocent Soviet government which never did anything wrong, never made a mistake, and which found, among its neighbours and the other powers of this earth, only régimes of the most villainous and diabolical intentions.

But could it not be that such methods are beginning to engender some new type of conflict somewhere in Soviet intellectual or historical circles—a conflict between their ideal of truth (and what they might think of as "scientific objectivity") and this ruthless and fairly cynical approach to documents and facts?

KENNAN: I am absolutely confident that such a conflict exists and that it is destined to grow. We are beginning to see Soviet historians at international congresses; we read their journals —they obviously wish us to do so—and they read ours; they wish to be considered as serious historians, and many of them are. All this is going to mean, it seems to me, an inevitable confrontation of Russian scholars with the actual factual evidence. I cannot see how it could be otherwise. History is, after all, both a form of literature and a form of science; but as a form of science it exerts, in the last analysis, its own discipline on those who occupy themselves with it, and particularly those who begin to do so while they are still young. I think that you cannot ask a person to constitute himself as an historian who will in a certain area pursue the truth and in another area pursue untruth. This is too unnatural an occupation. I am sure it will not work over the long run. Younger Soviet scholars are, after all, not told that they

This "dialogue" was tape-recorded recently at a conference of the Congress for Cultural Freedom held in Switzerland, which Mr. Kennan (among others: Raymond Aron, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Michael Polanyi, J. L. Talmon, Asoka Mehta) attended.

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should be complete propagandists. They are told that there is a certain field here for legitimate research. They are not going to be able to resist the infectious and the disciplinary quality of the pursuit of truth itself.

But I wonder what happens at an international conference in a debate between a "bourgeois historian" (and I suppose that's what you are labelled) and a "scientific socialist historian", when you get on to the subject of a document, or a footnote, or an exact date? Can one actually convince them because of this vague professional allegiance to the truth? Will they concede that the truth is above classes? How much do they still think they can "get away with"?

KENNAN: I think that the actually documented and proven fact is a thing which they are obliged to recognise. All their efforts to get away from it will normally be in the field of interpretation. The tendentious ones try to select the facts that suit their particular thesis. Sometimes they are a bit callous in this. They select material which they think will sound factual or perhaps, for all I know, they may believe to be factual. I do think, however, that there is a certain common ground of respect for the provable fact on the basis of which we can discuss and argue. Frustrating as it may seem, it is a process to which we ought to subject ourselves; we ought to go through with it, and patiently. Over the long run, I am sure it will have its effect.

Do you feel that in this field, as in many others, cultural exchange will have a reciprocal influence, or will it be all rather one-sided?

KENNAN: Oh, no. I am sure it will have reciprocal influence in every respect—and neither all to their advantage, nor to ours. I think there are things we can learn from them. But of course, the Soviet government has a curious idea of cultural exchange. For them it should have very closely defined limits, and should take place only in brief episodes which do not permit of any prolonged acquaintance or contact between the people on both sides. This seems to me regrettable and unworthy. They are not really so weak that they have to worry if one of their scholars carries on a personal correspondence, or has personal acquaintanceships in the outside world.

I have followed, of course, the Soviet comments on your own books. Isn't it a rather depressing debate? Here is some particular event of 1917, or 1919, or 1921, and you approach it in the light of your own idea of what a fact is, and what a proper interpretation is. They approach the same fact, ignore it, or displace it with another self-created fact.

KENNAN: One thing, for example, on which I was very much surprised to be criticised was the interpretation of Lenin's decree on peace, which was published on the day after the Revolution, and which called upon the warring powers to lay down their arms. Now this decree was written in such a way as seemed to me to appeal to people directly over the heads of governments; it was of quite an inflammatory nature. It was coupled with a demand that colonies be instantly released, and other rather flamboyant propaganda to which the Allied governments at that moment of extremity could certainly not have been expected to accede. I therefore pictured this as, first and foremost, a political and propaganda move designed to gain the confidence of the working masses in the warring countries, but *not* a serious bid to the governments for peace. I thought this was self-evident. But it appears to have aroused particular irritation with the Soviet historians. They cling to the theory that it was a perfectly normal bid in good faith by the Russians for an end to the war. Which rather surprises me. I don't think their early historians would have said this. But it suits the needs of the present peace campaign, and they think it more important, apparently, to distort the real meaning of Lenin's actions in the interests of their present peace campaign than to bring out the historical truth of the early years of their régime. This seems to me quite extraordinary, really. I'm sure that Lenin himself, were he alive to-day, would write in contemptuous repudiation of all this. He would say, "Of course, we were revolutionaries, and of course what we were working for was the world revolution. We were not pacifists for the sake of pacifism."

But isn't this really a hang-over from the Stalinist era? Then there was such a pathological sense of insecurity that they couldn't even adopt their normal Marxist method of saying, "Look, things have changed. The situation at that time was thus and so. The situation to-day is somewhat different. No contradiction at all!"

KENNAN: Yes, that's quite true. There is a curious sort of a duality to-day in the personality of the Soviet government. One sees that certain phases of Soviet life are controlled and shaped by persons who have quite a lot of confidence in the new Russia, and find unnecessary these devices of the Stalin age. But certain other forms of Soviet intellectual life, including the writing of history, still seem to be, so far as

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the Party itself is concerned, under the influence of people of whom that cannot be said, and who cling to all the timidity and all the narrowness. Still, I would like to say this: if one looks at the work of many of the younger Soviet historians, one sees that they have been obliged for disciplinary reasons, and in order to be able to publish their work at all, to cast it in the terms of some of these stereotyped concepts of present Party doctrine. But if one looks at the substance of their articles, usually in the middle instead of the beginning or the end, one sees that they have done some very serious and very competent and very useful research on various problems. And I think that, in itself, is a symptom that a bolder, a more confident, a more worthy approach to the whole exercise of history is gradually coming to the Soviet historical fraternity.

Wouldn't you make a distinction here between the natural and the social sciences? Objectivity in the laboratory has certain practical advantages, and it must have been a fairly objective Soviet science which resulted in Sputnik and Lunik. But objectivity in the social sciences surely has completely different kinds of consequences. They may want the practical results of truth and logic and objectivity when they issue in technological power. But will they ever want results which lead to a kind of intellectual facility and flexibility, to a certain tolerance, to a certain ability to see two sides of the question, to a certain scepticism—in other words, to all the worst virtues of "bourgeois liberalism"?

KENNAN: Well, they may not want it, but they are going to find that there is no other way forward except through the freedom of the mind. I am convinced of this, and I think that the entire younger generation in Russia feels this instinctively, and would be terribly, terribly reluctant to go the other way at this point in history.

If, then, this development goes further, and barring unforeseen set-backs and crises, do you foresee a cultural and intellectual situation, where, when a book like Boris Pasternak's comes on to the desks of the Soviet Publishing House, they could publish it and distribute it and review it and discuss it without feeling that the very bases of their society were being undermined?

KENNAN: I think we are almost on the verge of that situation to-day. We may not even be far from the publication of Pasternak's novel in Russia. It would not have been so shocking for them to have done this at the start—nothing would have happened—the régime wouldn't have fallen. . . . It would merely have meant that the literature available to Russian people, which is already a rich literature and very much preoccupied with moral values, would have been further enriched by one more great novel, dealing with very much the same problems that Tolstoy and Dostoievsky and others, have dealt with. I suspect that they must have been very close to the publication of it. Again, it is only a rather shabby timidity, and one which seems to me quite unworthy of a country as great as this and as strong as this, which prevented them from doing it.

Was it essentially, then, only a bureaucratic, short-sighted top-level decision?

KENNAN: I think so, one that they will live to regret from their own standards. I think they would have had far less trouble had they permitted the publication of this book; it would have been a sign of strength on their part and would have been taken as such by the younger people. After all, Mr. Khrushchev, I am sure, doesn't feel that they have anything to be ashamed of; he feels their record is one that can stand the scrutiny of daylight. Why not permit one honest and sensitive novel out of the early period of the Civil War to be published? This novel gave a picture, it is true, of the Civil War as a period of great confusion. Well, everyone in Russia knows that that's what it was! This was not an anti-Soviet novel; the people on the Left were not portrayed as fools or villains. I cannot understand this fear of having it said that life is what everybody knows it is.

II

I SHOULD *like to shift the scene, for the next series of questions, from the Soviet world to the Western world, where surely there isn't a fear of any single book of this kind, where every year possibly not literary masterpieces like Pasternak's* "ZHIVAGO" *but in the field of criticism and belles-lettres, a whole shelf-full of books are published which criticise, expose, and almost annihilate the very social-political foundations of Western society. Would you say that this is an unqualified source of strength? You have often dwelt on the "negative side" of American culture. One sees much with one's eyes, of course; but the major sources of information and persuasion are the big books of sociologists, economists, and political scientists. We look to a man like Galbraith to tell us what is wrong with our economic* mores, *we look to a man like Riesman to tell us where our psychological and social blockages occur. I have the feeling that we in the West all too easily say, "Of course, these books are written in criticism—therefore ours is a healthy society." Isn't that a*

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bit like saying that because there are ten brilliant surgeons on hand to analyse a case of cancer, therefore the case of cancer isn't really as bad as it originally was? Can a balance be struck between our developing society and the critical intelligence that is being brought to bear on its problems?

KENNAN: Well, I think you have come depressingly close to it with this analogy of the ten good doctors. I must say that I think these books have been extremely valuable, but I can't tell you what "beneficial effect" they have had in our society. I have been rather disappointed in our own American literature. We have had a whole series of novels which gave a bitterly critical picture of society, but so many of these books appear to me to reflect in their cynicism and in their hopelessness precisely the same evils against which they were written.

So many do seem so cheap in style and vulgar in intention. Think of how many have been written for the very same commercial motives which are condemned in their leading characters.

KENNAN: Yes, exactly! But I would not say the same of the earlier "angry" period of the American novel—the time of Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, Steinbeck, Thomas Wolfe, Eugene O'Neill. This was a more genuine critical literature with higher standards. Here was a real and deep search for the positive and for beauty, and not just the commercialisation of the negative.

Or could it be, George, that just as in certain historic epochs some of the best talents of the age went into painting, and in others into music; possibly this older American generation could express the conflict between conscience and society in the form of plays and novels, and our best contemporaries find themselves in social science, sociology, economics, criticism?

KENNAN: It's perfectly possible, and undoubtedly, obviously I suppose, true. One sees this when one looks at the history of art and literature. To me these changes are very mysterious. I always wish that I knew why they occurred—why we should have had, for example, in the aftermath of World War I, so magnificent a flowering of literature in the United States—poetry and drama and the novel —as we actually did in the 20's, in that absolutely crazy, cock-eyed epoch, where the superficial values of society have never been less impressive. Nevertheless, underneath the surface we had those very remarkable people, whereas now we have them, quite as you say, in the other field of the social sciences.

Perhaps, then, if we are not exactly helping to heal the cancerous sores in our own society, we are doing something for the social or political hygiene of the rest of the Western world? In England and in Germany, throughout all of Western Europe, enlightened opinion seems to be turning to American social scientists. Could it be that we are in a way forerunners in both the disease and the diagnosis?

KENNAN: Actually, of course, something very important is being done for American society in all this critical turmoil. The analogy you offer is faulty, because one cannot regard American society as hopelessly diseased. Every bit of self-scrutiny in a democratic society is healthy, and as our society is going to go on, for better or for worse, barring some catastrophe of the atom, it is certainly bound to be influenced by honest and penetrating self-criticism. And not only that. Somehow we Americans have made ourselves guilty over the course of the decades of great arrogance. Not the sort of ostentatious and cruel arrogance that has been exhibited by certain classes in Europe in the past, but a sort of childish arrogance about the virtues of our own society. It has not been a particularly nice trait. It has offended a great many people in the outside world. I think the spectacle of Americans actually looking at themselves, candidly and unsparingly, trying for the first time to get away from the romanticism of the 19th century, from the excitement and the provincialism of the whole frontier experience, taking account of themselves as a mature people—this is very inspiring.

BUT there has not only been this "childishness" or childish naïveté about American virtues. Surely over the last half-century, Henry James and after, Americans have also a naïve, possibly childishly naïve idea of their own vices. As if they were peculiarly American vices. The tale is familiar: there is no darkness in America; there are no châteaux; there is no tradition; American streets are rectangular and with no mis-shapen shadows where the spirit could dwell. And this was felt to be so because America was a new country and Europe was the vaunted scene of culture and humanist values. Now, we are all beginning to see a bit more clearly. We all share the problems of a commercial, industrial mass-society. We are all innocents, all decadents, all capitalists, all socialists, all bewildered angries. Suddenly we realise that maybe we're all in the same boat, or to go back to the old image—all on the same surgical table. Or are there some virtues and vices which are common to the West, and some

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virtues and vices which are peculiar to American civilisation?

KENNAN: Our troubles are in part the troubles of the West, though not always with the same degree of intensity. In other respects, they are rather unique with ourselves. Specifically American, and not so relevant to Western Europe, is the enormous factor of wastefulness—the absolutely absurd wastefulness of American society. I am thinking of the relative thoughtlessness with which this society exhausts its natural resources, in deference to the dictatorship of commercial considerations; also the over-production, as Galbraith pointed out, of all goods which can be commercially sold, and the under-production of social services through the public authority.

Private wealth and public squalor.

KENNAN: Yes, "private wealth and public squalor." I have also in mind the real damage that we have done to ourselves by the uncritical admission into our lives of the results of new technology. Of that, the automobile is exhibit No. 1. I think a growing number of Americans are persuaded that we have done untold damage to our society by permitting this sudden revolution in transportation from rails to the automobile. These two media of transportation have a precisely different disciplinary effect in the social sense—the railway, which was capable of accepting and disgorging its loads at fixed points, created the great railway metropolis of the 19th century, with all its unity, all its cultural excitement, all the things that made the great railway metropolises of that time what they were: London, Berlin, Chicago. The automobile has exactly the opposite effect. It is incapable of accepting or disgorging any great load of human bodies at any one place. It must fragmentise and explode that which has been united; and we have now succeeded in a land which prides itself on its local community, its local governmental arrangements, the "old New England town meeting," and so forth—we have succeeded in disintegrating the American community to an absolutely appalling degree: creating a complete chasm between the life and work, between the cultural centre and the place where influential people live, between real political power on the one hand and real economic and social power on the other. In every way we have fragmentised the elements of community at home. And we have had nothing very much to put in the place of those we have destroyed. When you see the depressing state of our great cities to-day, something which is far worse than the general aspect of our lives outside them, you realise the truth of this. Now this was only one gadget—the internal combustion engine—which we, without thinking, permitted to carry out this important revolution in our lives. There are certainly others—television is another very questionable one. I think it is high time we learned to ask ourselves how people ought to live. There are some parts of Europe where, it seems to me, some very tolerable solutions to these things have been found. In Switzerland, for example, the automobile and the railway, the bicycle and the human legs, exist very comfortably side by side. Elsewhere they are all at odds with each other and there is complete chaos. I am pleading here simply for a recognition of the subtlety and depth of the public problem involved—the problem involved for public authority in asking itself how is it desirable that people should live. What facilities should be given to them for life and work, how their lives should be arranged geographically, what opportunities ought to be offered to them for the use of their leisure. I don't want to tell people how to use their leisure; I do think they ought to have more opportunities than just the television set, or the local movie theatre. And isn't it up to us to create this?

III

THIS contemporary crisis would seem to be bound up with the problem of growth as a Western practice, possibly even as a Western fetish. Certainly to-day, as we see more and more, it has become something of an Eastern ideal. Doesn't the pattern embrace both underdeveloped countries as well as over-developed countries? The over-development is because of excessive growth—the under-development is because growth has not yet taken place.

KENNAN: Well, anyone can see why the underdeveloped countries are terribly interested in this problem of economic growth. One can even understand why they are tempted to make a sort of fetish out of it. I personally think that they are making a great mistake to wish to change their societies with the speed with which they actually seem to wish to do this. It is my own belief that if you change the lives of people so rapidly that the experience of the father, the wisdom of the father, become irrelevant to the needs of the son, you have done something very dangerous—you have broken the organic bond in the family, and you have created emotional trauma in the minds of young people. That is why I am a conservative. I think that the pace of change should always remain such that the parents have something to give to their children. I can remember very well the image of my own father, when he was a great deal older than I am to-day (he was born before our Civil War). In his old age, I, as a boy, could sense his

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depression and unhappiness at the realisation that this was an age he didn't understand; and that he had very little that was useful to tell me. But actually the modesty he showed in recognising this, was itself a great help to me. . . . I think that these leaders in the under-developed areas, who pursue economic growth with such concentrated passion, and are willing to sacrifice every other value to it, are mistaken. Nor do I, personally, see why one has to take the position that economic growth is essential to the health of our own Western society. I am constantly troubled by the things that I see written —and from very respectable economists—which reflect the view that our society can prosper and be what it should be only if it operates in a constant dynamic context—a quantitatively dynamic context.

Are you suggesting a qualitative turn in Western energy and dynamism, rather than the quantitative turn? I wonder whether your conservatism—or can one really speak of a kind of "revolutionary conservatism"?—can bear the burden of such a programme? What will be the equivalent of economic growth and economic dynamism in a country like the U.S.A. which for 150 years has been more or less exclusively devoted to that perspective? William James once used to worry about the moral equivalent of war. What is the moral equivalent of prosperity?

KENNAN: Growth certainly shouldn't be an end in itself. It is supposed to serve some purpose. You see, what worries me about the prospect of unlimited, quantitative growth, is that this involves certain consequences that seem to me obviously undesirable. In the first place, if you are going to have unlimited productive growth, it implies also a steady growth in population and labour supply. And this really frightens me. While we are not entirely an "over-populated country," there are large portions of the United States that already have fully as many people in them as I would like to see them have. As you know, we expect soon to have a single semi-urban band all the way from the state of Maine down to Virginia, down the whole East coast—without really any open country or agriculture between. This is what my friend Jean Gottmann calls "Megalopolis," and a very bad use of land it is. It disrupts the community and the structure of local political life: it takes much too much land out of cultivation; it is ugly; it is a poor way for people to live. I don't want to see this population growth continue indefinitely in our country. Furthermore, economic growth—unlimited quantitative growth—means, it seems to me, a continued, rather reckless exhaustion of natural resources. I am afraid that if it continues in the spirit it is moving in at present, it also means a continued contamination of nature by man. This is a thing which worries me a great deal. There are not only the effects of atomic tests, the effects on the atmosphere; there is also the question of atomic waste, not just from the weapons development, but even from the peaceful uses of atomic energy. There is also the question of the use of highly poisonous insecticides in agriculture. People do this absolutely recklessly: they take aeroplanes, fly over a field in which they want to get rid of one given bug, poison they-don't-know-what, and upset the balance of nature very badly. There is the question of modern detergents, which are used in the homes in increasing numbers and are flowing out into the seas and doing certain things to the seas and to the vegetation life—things of which reputable scientists tell me we know only that the results are incalculable and irreversible, and we will not know for thirty or forty or fifty years what they really are. Now, this seems to me frivolous in the extreme, and defensible only if you say that the only thing that counts for us is these few remaining years of our own lives—that we are absolutely unconcerned as to the future, and for the lives of our children. There are other things I could mention. We know what the situation is with smog in so many crowded cities, making life extremely unpleasant and unhealthy. . . . It is all related to this spirit of expansion at all costs. I think it is high time we began to think about it. I'm all against it.

BUT *it's at least a century since we were told that we've spent enough time "interpreting the world" and the time has come "to change it." Something must be done. But the surprising and paradoxical thing is that you are a conservative. I suppose you want not to "stop change" in some conservative or reactionary way of the last century, but rather to divert it. And not only divert it, but even revolutionise many institutions and many qualities of life. If I understand you correctly, you've come around to a feeling that public intervention is needed more than ever before—to a kind of new* "dirigisme" *in American and in Western life generally.*

KENNAN: True. What I have in mind is not to stop change; it is not that at all. It is merely to govern its nature, because it has been taking a course which is completely uncontrolled, and in which the motivating impulses appear to have come from acquisitive private groups. These groups should not be permitted to have an absolute free hand. Actually, I think there

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is need for great change in our society. When I say we should stop the fetish of growth in the quantitative sense, I don't mean that there are not very very interesting and progressive and drastic things that need to be done. For one thing, our big cities need to be torn up and put together again. We have all become very keenly aware of the extremely unhealthy nature of the development of our cities over the past fifty years. The blocking of the central area; the moving of the people who have political and social influence out beyond the realms of the city; the sucking into the centre of the city of people at the very lowest level of education and income; the civic abandonment of these poor people by the more influential ones; the abandonment of the city administration to the people who make themselves leaders among these groups of extreme poverty—all this has given to our cities not only the depressing outward aspect that they have, but it has ruined them as cultural and political communities. There simply is no more element of community in them. Men cannot relate themselves in a proper way to the other men with whom they work and the men that live around them. There is no clear-cut definition of what is "community" in the neighbourhood of these great exploded cities of ours any more.

Is there a similar development in the small towns, or is this only true of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles?

KENNAN: What is happening in the small towns is also quite disturbing. I've seen it in my own village in Pennsylvania. The village used to have a political and communal life. People really lived there; their children went to school there; they went to church there; they did their shopping there; they worked there. To-day this is all changed. The village has become a row of houses along a highway, twenty-four minutes by automobile from the big industrial town of York. How many miles it is, is not important. Time has become important, not distance. These people are related to the industrial town of York, only by time, not by distance. And they are no longer neighbours of each other. There are some that work in the village, but a great many others don't—nor do they go to church there, nor do the young people do their courting there. The village is only a sort of a row of dormitories where they happen to sleep; it doesn't even maintain a policeman any more. They say: it costs money; and after all we're all just a lot of houses on a highway; and most of the things that happen here happen on the highway, and let the state police come in and settle it. Well, you see here the disintegration and corruption of the very roots of local government by this extreme mobility and dispersal which we permitted to come into the community. The village used to have a railway—the railway doesn't exist any more. It has no bus connection with any other place. Nobody can live in this village unless he has an automobile to get in and out.

This is, of course, to a far lesser extent, as we've already conceded, happening elsewhere. Isn't it happening in the subtopian developments of England? Certainly the British are very much concerned about it, although they haven't reached the point of disenchantment with highways—they're just on the verge of being enchanted with the idea of having their first hundred-mile stretch.

KENNAN: One hundred miles?

They haven't built more than that. In fact, they say that the Romans built more during their years in England than the Anglo-Saxons built in the last ten centuries. Their enchantment is just beginning. The Germans have built their highways, and all their big cities, Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg, are absolutely choked with traffic. There isn't a conceivable mathematical way of getting the traffic in and out of most of those urban labyrinths. And the smaller towns are also beginning to take on this character, as formidable prospering factories come in and set up their machinery on the outskirts. Where will the cultural, the intellectual, the moral resources come from—not only in America but in the West—in order to get a new vision of what we want to do? Is it "sociology" that's going to revivify us? Will it be some political leader who is going to come and give us a concept of a New Deal? How do you foresee the turn of events?

KENNAN: Perhaps it will be not just one political leader, but a number of political leaders, as the understanding of these contemporary evils spreads. I think that new people are going to begin to come into political life who will see that things have to be done. Who will be doing the thinking? I have been very much impressed with "the city planners": they have had their noses rubbed in these problems. The most interesting people I know to talk to about American life to-day, are some of these men who are working in the field of city planning.

Is this all a kind of pragmatic outburst, or are there books, ideas, memories of the past, which play a rôle? Is it a "Jeffersonian" ideal? Are there American philosophers or writers who have had a formative influence in shaping your notions and ideas and criticisms?

KENNAN: I suppose Lewis Mumford was the first—his book on *The Culture of Cities*. There

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is one illustration in his book, which I have never forgotten. It is an old picture, or rather an etching, of a procession in France at the end of the Middle Ages, and under it, as I recall it, there was a caption which ran something like this: "You will notice that there are no spectators. Everyone in town was in the procession, because everyone in town had some relation to the public life of the place." And this is what we have lost. . . . It will take a long time, but you see what we are working out is a science of the relationship of different functions of life to each other, geographically and otherwise. How far shall a man go to shop and to send his children to school? Is commuting, the dragging back and forth every day of a half-million human bodies over distances of fifteen to fifty miles from New York, is that a good thing to have happening? Should people live near their work? Should there be a factory district in a town, composed exclusively of factories and another district composed exclusively of residences? It's these sorts of questions which people are beginning to ask themselves, and they cut very deeply. They have this significance—that whereas the Marxists saw only the exploitation of man by man as a possible evil in the industrial revolution, people now see much more the urbanisation of society itself and the things that the machine does to man as the real trouble. And I cannot help but think of the tremendous insight that lies buried in one of Chekhov's stories. I believe it was called *A Case in Practice*. It was the story of a young country doctor who went over to the factory compound to treat a neurotic daughter of the factory owner. He found an unhappy wealthy household, actually dominated by a German governess. He had to stay there overnight and he observed these people. In the evening, after dinner, he sat down on the front steps and looked across at the buildings of the factory compound, thinking what an absurdity this was. Here, he thought to himself, were two thousand people who worked like slaves all day, as though in a dream, and only woke up on Saturday nights in the pub, and all of this merely in order that some cotton cloths could be sold cheaply on some Eastern market. The only beneficiary of this—obviously the only person that was made in any way happy by it was the German governess. . . .

Why the German governess?

KENNAN: She was the only person who seemed to be doing well. And he arrived at the conclusion that all of this—the workers and their misery and the owners and their plight—was a kind of monstrous "misunderstanding." Think what a much more charitable interpretation that was than the interpretation of Marx. And he was absolutely correct—it is a huge misunderstanding—the misunderstanding of hasty and thoughtless industrialism in which both the entrepreneurs and the workers were all embraced, and which we are just now beginning to disentangle, and in a much more profound and much more charitable way, I think, than Marx tried to disentangle it.

IV

I WONDER *whether we couldn't take the two subject-matters that we've been talking about and put them for a moment in a common focus. On the one hand, we have this Soviet Russian society, or rather this Soviet Communist world, going through certain late forms of the industrial revolution. It began fifty or sixty years ago, but is now bursting forth in all of its power, full of restless, dynamic energy, devoted in an almost American way to reaching out and exploiting natural resources, to expanding frontiers. You have been arguing over the years that this will somehow, possibly, become another kind of régime, another kind of a society —something "Beyond Communism." On the other side, we have American society, which has gotten to something like the last stages of its dynamic restlessness. It has achieved unparallelled material triumphs, and now is groping for a new or different kind of society—something, perhaps, "Beyond Capitalism." I wonder whether the international situation of the next five or ten or twenty years, will allow these basic forces moving in one place beyond (always in quotation marks) "Beyond Communism" and "Beyond Capitalism" to a new form of world order.*

KENNAN: You might think that what I am talking about would serve, in so far as it focuses attention on home, on internal problems, rather than external ones, to weaken resistance to international Communism. Wouldn't it make the nations of the West unmilitant, and thereby lead gradually to a disproportion of military strength? Well, there might be something in that, although not, I think, as much as people fear. In the first place, the impression that we make generally in the world is a part of our general political and military posture, and it would certainly be improved to the extent that we address ourselves courageously and effectively to these problems. . . . I think that we can preserve what we need of a military posture.

But isn't the future danger more subtle? The West turns to its own social and economic problems, and possibly to new and daring solutions. Soviet society begins to go through this more flexible political and economic phase. American

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military and even political leadership begins to become increasingly meaningless. The battle of ideas and the struggle of loyalties takes on new forms. Won't more nations and peoples be looking more and more towards Moscow and Peking? Wouldn't our kind of society, despite our new urban planning and despite our new type of schools (or perhaps because of them) be a little strange to most of the ways of the world? Will we not be getting a gravitation of nations and peoples and public opinions towards the mechanical Soviet ways of progress, rather than our own?

KENNAN: So far as Communism is concerned, it is a question of the true aims of Soviet power. Are the Soviets essentially a "Welfare State," that is, is their totalitarianism only a means to the rapid achievement of this end? Or has the totalitarianism become an end in itself, so that the ultimate aim is merely, as Raymond Aron has been arguing, "to bring about total tyranny in the name of abundance and liberation"? I doubt whether we can usefully pose this question so sharply, or invite so clean and tidy an answer. Russia is a country of contradictions. The history of Soviet power is one long record of the confusion of ends and means.

Would you then subscribe to the general view that the Soviet era is basically a continuation of the previous trends—under Tsarism—towards a modern industrial society?

KENNAN: When the Russian Revolution occurred, Russia already was, and had been for some three or four decades, in a process of quite rapid evolution away from the archaic political and social institutions of Tsardom, in the direction of a modern liberal state. The development of a firm judicial system was far advanced; a beginning had been made towards local self-government; public opinion was becoming a force to be reckoned with. I have no reason to doubt that this represented the natural and underlying trend of Russian society in this country. It is a movement occurring somewhat later in time than, but otherwise not dissimilar from, comparable movement in Western countries.

1917 represents, then, more continuity than change?

KENNAN: I would say that the Revolution in many ways did interrupt the long-term trend of Russian society; but I do believe that this trend still represents the direction in which, over the long run, Russia must move. I know you will raise the question of Lenin. Yet despite Lenin's intolerant temperament and the doctrinaire authoritarianism with which he governed his own party, there can, I think be no question of the fundamental idealism of his purpose at the time of the revolution. It was certainly with reluctance and with heaviness of heart that he was obliged to concede, initially, the necessity of the terror.

But isn't terror the inevitable outcome of any attempt to put a Utopian vision into practice by the use of political authority?

KENNAN: I would agree. But I doubt that Lenin himself was aware of this. The Bolshevik movement was betrayed into terrorism and brutality by the strange sequence of events which carried it suddenly to power; revolution in a single country, with minimal popular support and a tiny proletariat. Now instruments of coercion once created have a tendency to find their own natural master. With Stalin brutality was made into an end in itself.

Do you see in the theory and practice of his successors a fundamental break with his methods and ideals?

KENNAN: For Stalin these methods and ideals were the only way he knew to protect his personal position and the integrity of his rule. Among a portion of the officials of the Party and police, it came to be taken as the normal way of government. To the people, at large, however, to the intelligentsia above all, and even to a considerable portion of the Party, it was not only hateful but a source of shame and humiliation. Among those who took this position, Khrushchev occupied a prominent place. But he was by no means alone, even within the Praesidium. Most of his senior colleagues were prepared to concede that a large portion of Stalin's methodology was unhealthy and undesirable, though they often differed over the question as to how much of Stalinism ought to be discarded and how much be retained.

What is your evaluation of how much has been discarded and how much retained?

KENNAN: What we now see in the Soviet Union represents a compromise among these differing views. The liberalisation has scarcely gone as far as some would have liked to see it go. Nevertheless, it has gone so far as to represent a highly significant departure from Stalinism and an essential alteration of the nature of the régime. Can it move back? Of course it can; there are no legal or constitutional barriers. But there is still a strong aversion in the older generation. And a younger generation is growing up which is habituated to a greater freedom and to greater expectation of personal comfort than they could have dreamed of some years ago. It would be extremely difficult, to-day, to turn the clock back.

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YET, *if we do not keep our eyes focused on Russia alone, I think you will agree that the pattern is confused. In certain outlying parts of the Soviet empire, notably in Eastern Germany, but also Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the movement away from Stalinism has not been nearly so marked. Is this greater totalitarianism a deliberate policy—or an accidental "national deviation" to the Right (as Poland is a "national deviation" to the Left)—or perhaps an involuntary or reluctant response to some "external necessities"?*

KENNAN: Of course there are still Stalinists in Moscow who find quite normal the manner in which Ulbricht's Germany is now governed. They would be happy to see the same principles applied elsewhere. But isn't it clear that this view has not always prevailed? Hence the significant variations within the satellite area itself. I believe the regions where Stalinist controls are most firmly maintained are those which are most neuralgic from the standpoint of the cold war. Poland repudiated of its own accord the excesses of Stalinist police terror—and persists stoutly in this repudiation—and Moscow has not seriously interfered.

Doesn't the Hungarian revolutionary experience indicate the point at which things might be considered to have gotten "out of hand"?

KENNAN: The crucial limit of Russian patience, to judge from Hungary, relates less to the extent of internal liberalisation in a satellite country—provided, of course, the formal devotion to "socialist principle" is maintained—than to the degree of fidelity to the international security arrangements of which Moscow is the centre. Had the Nagy régime not moved in October 1956 to denounce the Warsaw Pact, in circumstances which gave the Russians no assurance whatsoever that Hungary, if permitted to take this step, would not end up by joining the Atlantic Pact instead, is it at all certain that the final Soviet intervention would ever have occurred?

You know, George, I disagree with that thesis sharply, and I think that the documents which I have included in my "White Book" on The Hungarian Revolution *suggest a completely different reading of Soviet motives.*

KENNAN: That might be, but let's not lose ourselves in that argument now. My main point is that where strongly totalitarian features of government have endured in the Communist orbit, this has been for reasons having to do partly with the peculiarities of the local situation, or, in even greater part, with the pressures and necessities of the cold war. In neither case would the controlling fact appear to have been any such thing as a disposition on the part of the Soviet leadership to inflict these totalitarian devices for their own sakes.

THEN *the totalitarians, you would say, are slowly but surely on the way out?*

KENNAN: The picture, I reiterate, is not a simple one. On countless occasions when I have been asked which of two seemingly contradictory and incompatible realities is true in the Soviet Union, I have been obliged to say: both. The Stalinists are still there. They are people who, from habit, from fear, from limitation of vision, can think in no other terms than those of absolute domination. For them the Utopian end-product of socialism has become indistinguishable from a state of total political slavery. But these are only a portion of the leadership. They do not command the confidence of the oncoming generation. From the long-term——

And short-term? . . .

KENNAN: Yes, and short-time standpoints they would appear to be on the side of the waning, not the waxing trends of Russian life. In the main, the goals and trends of Russian Communism lie along the same path as those of Western liberal-industrialism.

This is what I was suggesting by my earlier question about the prospects of moving "beyond Communism" and "beyond Capitalism." What, then, divides the two worlds?

KENNAN: What divides the two worlds, in my thinking, is not a difference in aim. What divides them is fear, timidity, the unsolved problem of western Europe, and the unhappy dynamics of a weapons-race so absorbing that both sides tend to forget the issue of its origin.

But even if we concede your pattern of evolution, even if we reject an "absolutely negative" approach to Soviet society, there still remains a profound gap between the two worlds on such basic matters as the one-party régime, the suppression of criticism, and the systematic cultivation of falsehood. Aren't these all features of Soviet power that contrast basically with what we have in the West?

KENNAN: The differences are undeniable, but they are relative and not absolute. The deliberate cultivation of falsehood, as we were saying earlier on the subject of Russian historiography, seems to me to be undergoing, as a governmental policy, a process of severe erosion. I cannot imagine that it can be long continued in the manner of the past. As for the one-party system: it must be contrasted, unfortunately, with precisely that segment in the political life

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of the West which is itself to-day most subject to question, most doubtful in point of adequacy to the needs of the time. I mean the system of political parties and parliamentary institutions. In the doctrinal sense we in America also have in certain respects a one-party system. For aren't the two parties ideologically indistinguishable? Don't their pronouncements form one integral body of banality and platitude? And whoever does not care to work within their common framework, isn't he also condemned, like the non-party person in Russia, to political passivity —to an internal emigration?

I am afraid you will be widely misunderstood on this point, especially if you seem to be denying the validity of relative distinctions.

KENNAN: I would be the last to want to deny them. I find our system, for all its shortcomings, vastly preferable to that which confronts it on the Communist side—if only because it interposes no political barrier to the freedom of the mind. But from the standpoint of the underdeveloped peoples, seeking inspiration and example—and here I think you seemed to be agreeing with me when you raised the question of the next stage in the struggle of ideas and loyalties—this relativity is significant. It spares the necessity of hard-and-fast choices. It seems to me overwhelmingly likely that there are going to be in the future as many forms of government in this world as there are genuine national entities. No single pattern—as is already evident in the Communist orbit—need be, or will be, universally imposed, and this need not worry us. Admittedly, the personality of the full-blown totalitarian state is an international problem, in the long run intolerable to the security of neighbouring states and to the interests of world peace. But for the endless varieties and gradations of normal authoritarianism we in the West can afford to manifest a relaxed and even sympathetic tolerance.

How do you feel about the possible Western perspective of "beyond Capitalism"?

KENNAN: Well, this relates to the ideological principles, explicit or implicit, by which Western society is to-day informed. We have already touched upon some aspects—the lack of purpose, the lack of an answer as to the uses of leisure, and the shrinking field of politics itself in a satiated world. I can't help repeating that there seem to me to be certain effects of our modern industrial society which, if not corrected in good time, could well cancel out many of its advantages. And when I speak again of "over-population" I am not thinking just of the relation of population to food supply, but also of the spiritual effects of over-crowdedness. On this, in our earlier talks, I think we have been one: the lack of privacy, the pervasive urbanisation, the difficulty of contact and communion with nature.

Would you associate these evils with the specific form of an economic and political system?

KENNAN: When I ponder these evils I think they point to two deficiencies in outlook. The first is the restriction of the consciousness of obligation to the needs of the present generation alone—the self-centredness that regards Nature as an instrument and the convenience of contemporary man as an end in itself, as though there were no past and no future and as though man were not himself a part of Nature. I would plead for an end to this arrogant and hopeless attitude, and for the incorporation into the public philosophy of the West the recognition of the obligation to pass this planet on to future generations in a state no poorer, no less fair, no less capable of supporting the wonder of life, than that in which we found it. But secondly, I think these evils also have to do with the cult of production-for-production's sake. But we have already talked about the fetish of economic growth as an absolute good.

Here, too, I am afraid of misunderstanding—you will probably be marked down as a modern Luddite.

KENNAN: Well, Raymond Aron has already been making light of this as the customary complaint of "conservatives and ex-Marxists." But some of us do sincerely believe that we see around us abundant evidence of the wholly uncritical adoption into our lives of devices which are on balance of doubtful benefit to the human condition—and just because they appear to represent a saving of labour or a speeding-up of the processes of production or daily life. It is all on the assumption that whatever is efficient can only be good and useful. I find this assumption unwarranted, and this standard highly debatable. I would submit that no ideology of modern industrialism can be adequate which does not embrace a thorough-going scepticism about all technological innovation beyond what is necessary to satisfy basic material needs.

Beyond that is a dangerous "over-development," but how can it be checked?

KENNAN: Only by a readiness to take all this under the strictest sort of public control. Let science, by all means, be free. But its application to human life must be the object of man's sharpest distrust, and of the most severe social discipline. All of this points, again, to more

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"dirigisme," not less, in Western society. I am sorry about this. To my mind, it is unfortunate. But I see no escape from it.

The necessity could be avoided, I suppose, if one were to renounce altogether—one occasionally hears this in Asia—the fruits of scientific and technical progress, and by retiring to a more primitive level of technology.

KENNAN: This, let me emphasise, is not what I am advocating. The question is not whether public policy is to shape the lives of individuals. The question is whether the state is to acknowledge the responsibility for that shaping of the individual life which is already occurring by the processes which it tolerates or directs.

George, I wonder if in conclusion we could go back to the point of departure, namely your own work as an historian. You're finishing a third volume—will you remain as an historian in the field of American-Soviet relations, working with documents, or will you go on and address yourself to another historiographical task, or some other field in the Institute of Advanced Study? If you will just tell us a little bit about your own personal . . .

KENNAN: Yes, but I don't know yet what I am going to do. It will be three or four years before I can really hope to finish my third volume; then I am inclined to doubt that I ought to go on with this sort of history. What I have done may have had certain value, but I am not really a very learned man as a historian, and have not read as widely and deeply as other people have who entered on this profession at the age of 25 instead of at the age of 50, as I did. I would rather, really, throw myself into work that was more closely connected with such things as literature and the æsthetic side of life, for which I think perhaps, particularly in the later years of my life, I have greater instinctive understanding.

One Flesh

Lying apart now, each in a separate bed,
He with a book, keeping the light on late,
She like a girl dreaming of childhood,
All men elsewhere—it is as if they wait
Some new event: the book he holds, unread,
Her eyes fixed on the shadows overhead.

Tossed up like flotsam from a former passion,
How cool they lie. They hardly ever touch,
Or if they do it is like a confession
Of having little feeling—or too much.
Chastity faces them, a destination
For which their whole lives were a preparation.

Strangely apart and strangely close together,
Silence between them like a thread to hold
And not wind in. And time itself's a feather
Touching them gently. Do they know they're old,
These two who are my father and my mother
Whose fire, from which I came, has now grown cold?

Elizabeth Jennings

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FILM

A Note on the Movies

By NICOLA CHIAROMONTE

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
SHAKESPEARE, *Sonnet*, 53

NO ONE can deny that there is a difference between reading a good novel and seeing a good movie.

A good novel tells us something while a good movie shows us something; or, to be more precise, a good movie *has shown* us something, since the emotional effect is over when the film is over, and can be recalled only verbally and in a peculiarly abstract fashion. For in spite of the way critics retell the plot of a film, a movie is not a narrative but a series of actions that seem to be occurring. And the emotion they give us is the emotion of the onlooker, not of the participant, which we are in the novel. What we remember about a novel is the *meaning* of the facts, which are always related from the point of view of the characters, who are pure possibilities of consciousness and not physical entities. Moreover, each one of its sections is a distinct, yet indivisible, part of the whole.

But our recollection of a film is quite different. Certain parts stand out distinctly, while the whole can be remembered only vaguely. Now it is interesting to note that we cannot recall the parts without changing their very essence, for we are forced to make static what was originally pure motion, and to translate into logical and figurative discourse what was originally cinematic. So that a film cannot really be retold, for example. And when a movie critic recounts the plot of a film he makes it sound like something it is not, namely, a narrative.

The cinema is the only art, with the partial exception of ballet and pantomime, that cannot be grasped by non-mechanical memory (that is, the memory of quality and meaning). Now, both ballet and pantomime are composed of allusive figures, each of which can be "stopped" by the mind, without their meaning being altered since they express the design and style of the whole. Nor do the movements of a pantomime or ballet attempt to be the equivalent of "real" actions, whose meaning resides entirely in their occurring.

But what about music, one might well retort? Isn't it true that as soon as the performance of a symphony is over and the sounds have died out the emotional effect cannot be recaptured unless the performance is repeated? Without entering into the qualitative difference between the experiences of a movie and a piece of music, one must point out that the analogy between a musical continuity and a sequence of images is false. A musical composition is not merely a succession of sounds; it is a rhythmical development and the creation of a completely qualitative duration of time. Even if the notes are forgotten the quality remains, so that when we say Mozart or Stravinsky we know exactly what unique *quality* we mean and what universe we are referring to.

At this point the cinema specialist will reply that when we say Eisenstein or John Ford we also know what we mean. In a sense this is true, since these directors have a way of putting together a film which is recognisable—a "style," if one wants to call it that. But "style" in the case of a movie is more like the difference between one brand of consumer's goods and another. In any case, it is far from the complete mastery of material which in the case of Giotto or Tolstoy makes style synonymous with meaning, and with the individual creator's own special vision of the universe.

The "style" of a movie may be the use of certain devices; it may be the tempo of the whole show; it may be the expressiveness of the acting; or it may be the way all these elements are held together by the tension of plot development. The point is that once the film is over what remains is a general effect, a certain excitement, a vague impression comparable to the one we are left with at the end of a sports event, rather than to the state of mind originated by the contemplation of a poetic, plastic, or musical

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form. We have *consumed* something which seemed good or bad, clever or silly. But where is it now? And what was it exactly?

THE cinema is universally fascinating because it is nothing but a passing show, resembling magically the actual experience of the passing of time. The peculiar pathos of film images lies in their evanescence. As soon as we try to arrest, fix, and capture them, or treat them as if they composed a stable form we destroy their magic, kill their essence, and obliterate whatever poetry they have. One might define the quintessence of cinema art as the giving of non-lasting form to what, in fact, does not last. The impossibility of the spectator's bringing back to memory the impact of cinematic action is an intrinsic quality of this means of expression. As no other medium does, the movies imitate in an overpowering way the flow of real time, charged as it is with events and expectation of events; and like real time, a film cannot be reversed or remembered, except in fragments.

After the most skilful and effective film, all we are left with are separate parts which we find peculiarly difficult to put together, plus a vague impression of the whole. We can, of course, visualise the scene in *Potemkin* when the sailor picks up a morsel of meat swarming with maggots, or the famous shot on the staircase; we can also recall the delicate romanticism of *Les Enfants du Paradis*. As we do this, however, we are immediately aware of the fact that we are not in possession of the complete image that evoked the original æsthetic emotion but fragments of it—scattered pieces, *disiecta membra*. It was the sequence of the impressions that we had when we first saw the film that gave rise to the original emotion, and now they have vanished. It is true that we can see the film again and repeat the feeling, but we cannot enrich it. It is nothing but a reiteration, and our only authentic experience of the film is the first one, no matter what we do.

Now this is never true of poetry, music, or painting. Of course one can read Canto XXVI of the *Inferno* a hundred times without feeling anything but cold admiration. However, the moment arrives when the verses come alive for us, and it is a *new* experience, the result of everything relevant to Dante's vision of Ulysses that we have experienced since the first reading.

As for a sonata or a painting, even when our recollection of these works is imperfect, and most details are present only faintly, we retain possession of the whole, because of the very nature of these objects. A few measures of Mozart are still Mozart, and a Van Gogh yellow *is* Van Gogh. Why? Because what counts in these works is always and solely their meaning; their sound and colour are important insofar as they send us back to the meaning. And it is the experience of *quality* which remains fixed in our memory.

Whereas what we remember in a movie are events that are put together in such a way that their meaning seems to be the same thing as their apparent motion. In fact, there cannot be two different executions of a movie. Pictures in a film do not have meaning, but direction, the irreversible direction of their happening. That is why memory cannot revive them. Just as it cannot revive the past events of real time until the miracle of Proustian resuscitation occurs, or we suddenly discover their meaning and value, the truth that lay hidden in them.

Such illuminations, metamorphoses, and conversions are the sign of what we call "spiritual life." And they are based, not on time as it is materially experienced, but on its very opposite, on that which transcends our "normal" experience of time, with its discontinuity, its errors, and its opacity. What captivates us in a film is the possibility of wallowing in an artificial time that is both extraordinarily similar to and more intense than "real" time. Yet, after the movie is over we are left with an insatiable desire for "real" time, which we can feel, enjoy, and move in. The catharsis of the real through the unreal, which up to now has characterised art, does not take place in the case of the movies.

IT HAS been said that "the joy brought to us by the cinema is the revelation of the photogenic quality of the objects in movement."

Perhaps "excitement" rather than joy would be the right word to describe the impression left on us by the first picture of a locomotive racing into a station that we saw on the screen. Excitement at what? At the fact—which is as strange as it is everlasting and fundamentally childish—that there we saw action itself, pure movement abstracted from any context of reality, shown immediately and absolutely, as it can never be in actuality.

When we see movement in real life it is never movement alone that we see, except in moments of violent emotion as when a speeding car misses us by a few inches, or when a person invades our consciousness with frantic gestures. However, despite what is generally believed, movement is not the most important part of our experience of reality, and it becomes so only when the external world takes on a frantic aggressiveness and threatens or exalts us without leaving us time to think beyond the imminent danger or excitement.

What is remarkable is that such moments are distinguished from others by a feeling of great certainty in which the usual inertia of things

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and the formlessness of ordinary time are overcome; the world is reduced to intense expectation and to a simple choice between grabbing or escaping whatever is speeding by; or just waiting feverishly for what is going to happen. The fascination of danger, gambling, and violent action lies in the great simplification of the world that they imply. And this fascination is connected with the instinct which makes the individual try to get hold of life as if it were an object whose meaning can be captured along with its material possession. There is no doubt but that the world is *also* what it seems to be in such moments of frenzy—totally present, totally hostile, or totally benign, and made up of a sequel of senseless events. This instinct can be exorcised by mind or heart; it can be hypnotised by collective emotion; or it can be appeased by the magic of machines; but it can never be suppressed. The cinema hypnotises it for a moment by offering it a temporary outlet in a world of moving shadows, and suggests that living is simply being involved in an indefinite series of events in a world devoid of any stable meaning.

IN REAL life movement is always subordinated to something else, and presented in a context of other signs and warnings that come to us from the external world: by itself, it means very little. When we look at people gesticulating and moving behind a window on the other side of the street their movements appear to be definite signs of something, yet they are so vague as to be enigmatic. Those gestures are the final outcome of feelings, intentions, and purposes of various kinds; and if we don't know what is behind them we don't know anything at all about them. Even if we succeeded in understanding their immediate significance we should still not know the deeper meaning they have in the story of the people's lives. Yet the spectacle is fascinating. The pantomime surely means something, since gestures are the clearest, least equivocal signs that a man can give of his immediate intentions and emotions—the final result of his inner life, as it were. Hence we cannot help speculating about that dumb agitation, that spectacle so pure it can have an almost infinite number of meanings, and yet seems to have but a single "right" one, exactly like a riddle. At the same time, however, we know that we can never go back from these incoherent gestures to exactly what they mean to those people, since we are ignorant of their actual context. From motive to act a stretch of time has flowed which cannot be reversed. Only when the gestures are extremely explicit can we put vague labels like "anger," "love," or the like on them. And only when the acts are frankly acts of violence do they become unequivocally indicative, even though the motives of violence remain obscure.

In real life, in a context of concrete experience, movements, actions, and the external aspect of things are not only what are most ambiguous, but what are least meaningful. What matters is that which precedes and follows these manifestations—their causes and their effects in the light of our knowledge of men, nature, and culture. In the movies (and their peculiar magic consists mainly, if not entirely, in this) the field of consciousness is completely occupied by gestures, actions, and other external signs; and these most fleeting aspects of the world are made to be not only supremely unambiguous but also the very locus of meaning. Everything that cannot be indicated by a gesture, or by a purely utilitarian verbal utterance in function of the gesture, is excluded from the screen. In spite of recurrent attempts to make films say more than they ever can say, a successful movie (that is, one that captures its audience because it manages to substitute the artificial time of its action for real time) is one where the pictures are made to follow each other according to their elementary logic and not according to complicated intentions and theories. The achievement is infinitely fascinating to the child in us.

In real life we love or we "love to love," as St. Augustine said; we think about love and we are never sure what it is and what it means. On the screen the hero and the heroine go through the motions of falling in love and that's that.

THE eye of the camera is, indeed, the "eye of the world"—nobody's and everybody's eye. It gives us a kind of absolute perception which is impossible in reality, insofar as real perception is intrinsically complex, accompanied as it is by the richness and ambiguity of an individual consciousness. In reality we are never completely external to the world of persons and objects, but are always involved through our feelings and our thoughts. Photography, however, is a feat of mechanical magic by which we are made to stare at the world from the outside, so that we can actually look at it (for the first time, as it were) instead of just seeing it.

This strange privilege is what makes for the enormous importance and magnetic power of the camera as an instrument. But it is also the limit which can never be passed. Practically boundless, the magic of the camera is actually confined to the presentation of the physical appearance of things, *isolated from all the rest.* The language of physical appearance is the camera's own language, and it is the most elementary language we can conceive of, the least common denominator of all human expressions. It is, in fact, so elementary and so com-

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mon that it might be said that the camera's is the idiom of the inarticulate itself in man. The idiom not of Caliban, the unhappy monster, but of a Caliban who has found perfect "adjustment" in a world made up entirely of fleeting acts and shadows, and cleared of all malicious spirits.

The photographs of disasters, famous men, and shapely women that we see in *Life* Magazine are supposed to "bring the world to us." But what these pictures actually accomplish is the inhuman feat of transforming real people and events into objects of sheer inspection, severed from all living context and meaning by the surgery of the camera. We can look without seeing, grasp without understanding, be excited without having any definite feeling. The density and slipperiness of real events with which we are connected by fears, expectations, desires, ideas, and conflicts of ideas are put out of action by the photographic image. Reduced to clear-cut appearances, things become infinitely more evident and infinitely more meaningless than they can ever be in reality. What we are left with is, indeed, the "film" of life. Instead of being brought *to* us, the world has been successfully "gotten out of our system."

The eye of the camera gives us that extraordinary phenomenon—the world disinfected of consciousness.

Penelope in Doubt

Forgotten brooch and shrivelled scar.
Were these the only guarantee
This was Odysseus? Did she go
Through twenty years of drifting snow,
Whitening that head and hers, to be
Near as a wife, and yet so far?

The brooch came closer as he told—
Grown suddenly young—how he had lost
The wild doe and the raging hound
That battled in the golden round.
She listened, but what shook her most
Was that these creatures made her old.

Odysseus and that idle tale—
How many things in her had died
While hound and doe shut in the ring
Still fought somewhere in the world, a thing
So strange, her heart knocked on her side.
His eyes with time were bleached and pale.

A stranger, who had seen too much,
Been where she could not follow, sealed
In blank and smooth estranging snow
From head to foot. How could she know
What a brown scar said or concealed?
Yet now she trembled at his touch.

Edwin Muir

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NOTES & TOPICS

Narayan at Oxford

DURING the visit to England in November of Jayaprakash Narayan, the former leader of the Indian Praja Socialist Party, a small conference was arranged at his request at St. Antony's College, Oxford. Its purpose was to discuss the ideas for the reorganisation of Indian society put forward by Jayaprakash in a memorandum called *"A plea for reconstruction of Indian polity."* The conference was made up of philosophers, sociologists, and economists. It was agreed that no report should be issued, but there were no mysteries about the general drift of the conversation.

Jayaprakash, sensing perhaps the changes which will come over Indian politics when Nehru eventually withdraws, wishes to turn into an effective political programme the Gandhian ideas which have been kept alive during Nehru's reign by Vinoba Bhave and the Bhoodan movement. Jayaprakash repudiates the principles and practice of the Nehru period. These are expressed in the constitution adopted in 1949, in which Gandhism has virtually no place. Jawaharlal Nehru has sought to make India a modernised, secularist parliamentary democracy of the Western type.

Jayaprakash concentrates his attack on the "party system" which goes with this constitution. According to him it has carried political faction into the village and has divided Indian society in matters where otherwise it might have been united. Government has been an expression of "urban values"; but only 20 per cent of the country's population live in towns. For the village, it is "something remote, inexplicable, uncontrollable."

THIS ANALYSIS WAS CHALLENGED by many of the participants in the conference. They admitted that Indian society might be in "disintegration." The individual had lost many of his traditional connections with society, and this caused neurosis. But the new institutions could be a remedy. The individual might have lost his sense of "belonging" to a group, but the maligned political parties offered new groups which could once again knit together the "atomised" individuals. In them the individual could find a larger purpose than his own. The parties could be educative and reforming. For example, they were breaking down the feudal structure where it still existed. . . .

Jayaprakash proposed that the focus of political life should be shifted from the national parliament to the village. The village community, run by a council directly elected by the villagers, should be the principal organ of government. Since many functions of government extended beyond the village, the villages should be grouped into units of about 150; the councils to administer the groups—called the *Panchayet Samithi*—should be elected indirectly by the primary village councils. The qualification for being elected to the basic village council would be residence in the village, and the people elected to the superior councils would therefore also be villagers. By this means, Jayaprakash hoped to prevent the intrusion of the party into the village. This is what he calls the "communitarian" system of government.

Jayaprakash did not propose to abolish the superior strata of government. These would be needed for such purposes as defence, foreign policy, currency control. But he argued that a surprising amount of the business of government would be carried out by the *Panchayet Samithi*. The powers of the upper strata would be devolved from below, and would be restricted by law.

Discussion at the conference fastened upon the problem of parties in the new structure. Jayaprakash hoped that the entire system might function without them; but he was willing to envisage parties, either new parties or the same as at present, functioning in the higher strata. It was argued that, short of actually prohibiting the parties by law, it was impossible to prevent crusading parties from operating. These might have one supreme object: to obtain power at the centre in order to apply their panacea to society. This would overthrow the communitarian system. It did not become clear how this was to be prevented.

The conference was divided about the virtues of Village Government. Would villages be more enlightened than political parties? Would they be more democratic? One of those taking part, who had been born in Montenegro, described the oligarchic system in his own village. Somebody else quoted Marx on the traditional village society in India.

> These idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of oriental despotism. They restrained the human mind in the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of

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> superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. . . .

IF THERE WERE TO BE no political parties, who would control the upper strata of government? Who would turn out a government which had exhausted its mandate? Jayaprakash evidently envisaged at the top a fairly extensive system of administration, even if less elaborate than at present. A central government would, for example, have to control defence, and a heavy industry which the army would need. (Jayaprakash would prefer Gandhian methods of natural defence, but realised that at present India was unlikely to discard its army.) A bureaucracy would exist to run this administration. Some people at the conference felt that, if there were no political parties to control the bureaucracy, the régime would turn into a bureaucratic despotism, rather like Tsarist Russia or the Habsburg empire before its liberation. The threat from China made this more likely; the bureaucrats would extend their powers on the pretext of national emergency. Then, a reform which had begun as a kind of Rousseauist simplification of society and an attempt to restore "true freedom," might end in a worse form of authoritarianism than the present.

The conference thought that Jayaprakash was legislating for "a status society": village councils could hardly guide India through a period of rapid social or economic change. But, then, it was supposed that he did not want economic change. Given his system of thought, he must be against industrialisation. He was legislating to remove some of the social or psychological ills of India, but at the cost of giving up ideas of economic progress, and of condemning India to spiritualised poverty.

Jayaprakash's reply showed that his thought was much more subtle and more realistic. He did not despise industry: he wanted it differently organised. He thought that about 65 per cent of the industry at present carried on in India could be localised in the village, where the worker was better off than in a town slum. All that was needed was organisation and small-scale unity of production. He would like to see the very distinction between agriculture and industry become much more blurred. Certainly the peasant must use machinery—but let the machinery be brought to the village. Even so, industry was not the answer to India's needs. The chief need was food. Industry did not manufacture food, and could not do so. India's food output would be increased very greatly if India's chief asset, labour, was organised properly. Here was the task for the village councils. They could organise the farmer to dig wells, to use better seeds, to plough better, to consolidate landholdings, to market more cheaply, to use up-to-date methods.

The conference asked if this was not already being done by the "Community Development Projects" of Nehru's India. Jayaprakash admitted that was not wholly bad, but they had been spoiled by what Chinese Communists call "commandism." Petty officials had ordered the peasants about, had thus set the peasants against them, and had failed therefore to light the spirit of self-help in the villages. Here, again, Jayaprakash showed that the base of his thought was a belief in the native goodness of man if released from arbitrary political institutions.

Goodness—true. But it could not be relied on by itself. Here Jayaprakash's realism showed itself. The alternation of vision and realism, of radical experiment and sobriety, is what makes him important. The moment he is about to be dismissed as utopian, he suddenly comes out with remarks which show him, as the son of a Bihar peasant, to have fewer illusions about the nature of the peasant than the politicians whom he criticises. The village councils are not to be left to themselves, to act untutored. They are to be shepherded by an enormously expanded Bhoodan movement. This is to act rather like one of the great monastic movements of mediæval Christendom. Renouncing the world, and renouncing power, it will nevertheless act as the guide and animator of India's village polity.

Jayaprakash's views provoked all kinds of questions about the West. What effect did the Industrial Revolution really have upon it? How many decades was it before the Industrial Revolution had brought any benefits to the mass of the people? Should India really copy the West? Was Western society sick? Was madness on the increase? If in the West a physically sick man need most often no longer die, did not the West breed more neurosis than in the past? Which was more deadly, appendicitis which might kill a man, or neurosis which might kill him spiritually and impel him also to kill others?

THE CONFERENCE PULLED ITSELF together, and returned to India. Jayaprakash is an "interventionalist." Statements by him are published at every world crisis. He is the enemy of Communism. He denounces the over-mighty Communist states because he is opposed to all *étatisme*. Now India is under actual attack from China. How would an India, constituted as he wishes to see it, provide for its defence if the Chinese attacks continue? Jayaprakash believes that the Indian army is already strong enough to be a fairly effective deterrent to actual attack. The debate at the conference (and throughout

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his visit to England) suggested also that he hoped that great-power rivalry would form a protecting roof over India. India could reorganise itself because it could know that in the long run America would not tolerate any large-scale over-running of India by an Asian imperialism.

Nobody at the conference liked to ask Jayaprakash whether his renunciation, his giving of himself to the Bhoodan movement, precluded an active part by him in bringing into being the new polity of his memorandum. Certainly he will not seek power by campaigning according to the methods of parliamentary democracy. But if there were bewilderment in India, if public opinion summoned him, if he were drafted—that might be a different matter. Jayaprakash has gone through all the right motions to establish himself as the God-sent leader in the minds of much of India. He has not gone through the motions with the idea that they would be good propaganda. It has just happened.

Guy Wint

Dr. Watson's Dupe

By Andrew Boyd

It is high time, now that the Conan Doyle centenary is here, to state the bitter truth. The evidence is unchallengeable. The great Sherlock Holmes was either a great fool, or something worse. Dr. Watson was unquestionably something worse than the honest fool he pretended to be.

Many apparently penetrating studies of the Holmes canon have been made—but all of them by over-affectionate devotees. Has there been a deliberate conspiracy of silence about the painful facts?

Watson was a shameless impostor with a shady past. There are only two possible explanations of Holmes' long association with him. Either the doctor fooled his supposedly brilliant friend from start to finish; or, having fooled him at first, he gained so tight a hold over him that Holmes, after twenty-two years in this evil man's power, was able to escape only by fleeing to lead a hermit's life on the South Downs. The second explanation seems the more likely—and the more appalling.

Watson was an extremely clever fellow, who to my knowledge made only one serious slip. He kept up for years on end his pose as a perpetual innocent, never forgetting to be newly astonished by the wickedness of the world. He prudently spattered his accounts of his life with Holmes with petty inaccuracies about dates and other trivia—enough of them to keep a whole host of students harmlessly busy—and even with cryptograms calculated to divert ingenious minds into wild speculations like those of the Baconians, the wildest being the theory (Rex Stout's) that Watson was really a woman. But he made just one mistake that cannot be easily explained away, as his vagueness about dates could, as the sort of innocent error that we all make from time to time. And this one slip is quite enough to expose him as an impostor.

In *The Sign of Four*, he solemnly recorded Jonathan Small's confession about the Agra treasure, in which the three other members of the Four were repeatedly described as Sikhs, and—again, repeatedly—named as Abdullah Khan, Dost Akbar, and (to touch a pinnacle of impossibility) Mahomet Singh. Two Mahommedan names and one bizarre Mahommedan-Sikh hybrid. No educated man with years of service in the Indian Army could possibly have recorded them, even if he was recording another man's garbled narrative, without comment. For those who are not familiar with the way that Indian personal names are strictly related to religion, one may explain that Watson might as well have claimed a knowledge of Scotland and then set down a tale about three simple Highland soldiers named Venizelos, Vasco da Gama, and Voroshilov.

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So Watson's claim to have spent the three years just before he first met Holmes in the Indian Army was a fraud. Why did he make it? Recall the circumstances of this meeting. Watson had turned up in London after an absence of three years, almost penniless and with a bullet wound in his leg. He found in a bar an old acquaintance from his medical days at Bart's; conveniently, note, not a close acquaintance who might have made enquiries after Watson's disappearance from the country. The innocent Stamford promptly introduced him to Holmes, who with equal innocence at once proposed to this total stranger that they should share lodgings in Baker Street. And Holmes practically handed him a veil for his past on a plate.

Watson must, indeed, have relished the way this loquacious simpleton of an amateur detective actually saved him the trouble of inventing a cover story. Holmes, as usual, was trying to show off—a weakness that immediately showed Watson how this new victim could be exploited. "You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive," was Holmes' very first remark. The wily doctor, feigning to be vastly impressed, hastened to agree that he had. Note that he was slow to broach the matter to Holmes again; he was perfecting his story. From then on, he built up by stages his yarn about serving as an Indian Army doctor, being wounded in the Afghan wars (that accounted for the bullet), contracting tropical diseases (a useful explanation for the physical weaknesses acquired in years of wild living), and spending weary months in hospital.

He thought it out well. A strange series of events, he explained, had kept him well away from the army unit to which he was nominally attached, except for one brief moment at the height of the confused and disastrous Afghan expedition. Holmes would have had to do a good deal of checking up to disprove this story. He did not bother to. There was nothing flashy or bizarre about it; and it always took something exotic or macabre to stir the normally lethargic detective's curiosity.

What, then, had Watson been doing during his three missing years? We cannot be quite sure; but the indications are plentiful. There was a bullet wound in his leg. He had grown a heavy moustache which effectively shielded him from recognition by old friends. He claimed "an experience of women which extends over many nations and three separate continents." He had a revolver, in good working order, and carried it with him regularly. He drank, and knew a good deal about narcotics. He had expensive habits, but hardly any money of his own. He admitted having been in the Australian goldfields, those haunts of wild and lawless men. His constant protesting too much about being only a simple medical man, and his habit of emitting cries of alarm and outrage at the first hint of violence, ring hollowly against this background.

Something had evidently driven him from England just when, having completed an expensive education and qualified for a respectable career in medicine, a secure future seemed to stretch in front of him. Was this a sudden plunge into evil ways, or had Watson been tainted with them even in youth? Perhaps one can read too much into his admission that "during my school days I had been intimately associated with a lad named Percy Phelps." Many years later, the doctor could still recall vividly that he had found it "rather a piquant thing to chivvy him about." Phelps, reappearing as a grown man (in *The Naval Treaty*), showed himself a strange creature, much given to screaming, shrieking with delight, pressing things to his "bosom," and kissing other men's hands. He brought out a streak of the sadist even in Holmes, on the briefest of acquaintance. Heaven knows what Watson's long intimacy with him involved. One may not need to look any further for the reason why a promising young doctor should have to leave the country suddenly and lie low in remote places until he felt it safe to return to London.

But money was more probably the root of Watson's evil. His father had been wealthy, and he had been brought up to appreciate good living. His elder brother, however, was evidently the favourite, and inherited the best part of the family fortune—perhaps even the whole of it. This brother—about whom Watson said never a word to Holmes for the first seven years of their Baker Street companionship—dissipated his wealth, took to drink, and died relatively young. It is a classic setting for tragedy: the embittered younger brother, watching the elder squander the inheritance of which he had been denied a fair share. We do not know how the elder brother died, but one can well imagine a violent and squalid end in some drinking-den; and we do know that Watson habitually carried a gun, and that after his brother's death he was observed to have gained possession of his fifty-guinea watch.

Other questions now arise. Why should this man with a murky and violent past voluntarily attach himself to a detective? Did he shrewdly judge that the best way to divert attention from his own dubious ways was to get so close in under Holmes' guard that Holmes himself would never take a good look at him, while the

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curiosity of other people would be stilled on seeing the doctor so patently under the detective's ægis? Did some *nostalgie de la boue* compel him to find a way of keeping in touch, by associating himself with Holmes's investigations, with the criminal underworld which he had long frequented? Neither of these explanations seems enough to account for an association that lasted for more than two decades.

THE truth behind a mystery is usually a sordid one. I fear it is so in this case. Watson most probably latched on to Holmes for the money. In his accounts of their experiences, of course, he portrays Holmes as having a soul far above fat fees. Yet a remarkable number of the detective's clients happened to be millionaires, heiresses, noblemen, owners of Derby favourites, or reigning monarchs. His apparent disdain for the gold they invariably proffered was probably no more than a shrewd opening gambit—and an effective one, for it usually reduced these illustrious personages to grovelling humility.

From time to time, one gets a glimpse of the financial basis on which the Baker Street partners really operated. "Well, well," said Holmes to the fabulously wealthy Isadora Klein, "I suppose I shall have to compound a felony *as usual*" (my italics); and she meekly signed him a cheque for £5,000 as hush money, which may or may not have ever reached Mrs. Maberley. Employed by the Palace to recover the £100,000 Mazarin diamond, he told the trapped thieves: "If you hand it over—well, I'll compound a felony." After catching the German master-spy, Von Bork, he made no bones about his intention of cashing the £500 cheque he had tricked his victim into signing. When he had discovered where Silver Blaze, the missing favourite for the Wessex Cup, was hidden, he kept the secret to himself, in collusion with the vile Silas Brown, long enough to obtain odds of fifteen to one on what amounted to a dead cert.

There are other revealing indications of the profitableness of the game to which association with Holmes admitted the scheming doctor. There was, for example, the link with Langdale Pike, who made a "four-figure income" out of scandal sheets. "Holmes discreetly helped Langdale to knowledge, and on occasion was helped in turn." The opportunities for blackmail offered by Holmes' own copious dossiers and his contacts with criminal agents such as Shinwell Jones must have been considerable. And there is an almost gloating sound to Watson's own boast about his tin box in Cox's vaults, "crammed with papers . . . there are some which involve the secrets of private families to an extent which would mean consternation in many exalted quarters if it were thought possible that they might find their way into print."

Holmes himself was, I am sure, never a willing confederate in any of this; but he may well have been an unwilling one. It is hard to believe that he never found Watson out; it is impossible to believe that he would have voluntarily maintained, from 1881 until 1903, his association with such a sinister character. Evidently the doctor had quickly established some extraordinarily strong hold over him. One's first thought is naturally that this was just one more case of Watsonian blackmail; Holmes was rash enough to let his associate witness several of his apparently habitual compoundings of felonies, and that alone would place him in the doctor's clutches. But this will not quite do. In 1891, when Holmes was presumed drowned in the Reichenbach Falls and vanished from men's sight for three years, he had the perfect opportunity of escaping for ever from his thraldom. Yet in due time he came back to Baker Street and delivered himself once again into Watson's power. Something worse than blackmail must have been involved.

WE ARE IN DEEP, and very murky, waters here. Unhappily, however, there seems one only too probable explanation. Holmes was not merely a drug addict, but a connoisseur of narcotics. "Three times a day for many months" Watson saw him insert the point of his hypodermic syringe into a forearm "all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks." Morphine, cocaine, and for all we know other familiar drugs, barely took the edge off his melancholy ennui. His febrile mind may well have yearned for richer and rarer sensations. Watson, with his medical and Oriental and criminal expertise, was just the man to supply these exotic needs. One can all too easily suppose that Holmes rapidly became wholly dependent on the sinister doctor's access to drugs of fantastic potency; that his secret journeying through Tibet, Persia, Arabia, and the Sudan between 1891 and 1894 represented a vain attempt to find an alternative source of supply; and that, having failed in his search, he was forced to creep back to the one man who could satisfy his terrible cravings. In the light of this theory, the picture of the two of them sitting opposite each other in that silent, stuffy room in Baker Street, the clock ticking loudly in the horrid stillness, takes on a nightmarish *Huis Clos* quality. This is not the Baker Street that the legion of the devoted faithful know. And yet—what other possible explanation is there of the strange case of Dr. Watson's dupe?

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Farewell to Marx

THE point about party programmes is that they are rarely taken seriously. The electors do not take them seriously because they never read such ponderous documents anyway; the politicians, once they are in power, usually base their policies more on solid concrete interests than ideological maxims.

But there are exceptions to every rule. The German social-democracy is a "programme party" of the first water: in its history of nearly a hundred years it has always attached the greatest importance to basing its policy on a solid system of principles laid down in a fixed programme rather than merely on the urgent issues of the moment. In this respect at least it has remained true to its Marxist tradition: in its view any political action that is intended to influence and transform society must be based on an analysis of that society. But since social conditions are never static but subject to constant change, Social Democrats are repeatedly compelled to re-interpret a new reality in their programme.

It is only in this context that it is possible to understand their new "programme of principles" which was recently adopted in Bad Godesberg by an overwhelming majority at a specially convened Party Congress. It marks the final break of the great German opposition party with the fundamental tenets of Marxism. It is not only that the name of Karl Marx and the concept of Marxism are missing from the declaration of principles which has now become binding on the party; words like "class" and "class struggle" are also carefully avoided in the document. The notion that the working class acts as the "gravedigger of capitalism" and that it is destined, by overthrowing capitalist class-society, to bring about the classless society—this optimistic basic idea of the theory that pretentiously described itself as "scientific socialism" has now been thrown by the German Social Democrats on to the scrapheap of utopias.

At the same time, the transfer of the means of production to common ownership, which has hitherto represented the essence of every socialist programme, has been stripped of its overriding importance. It is true that common ownership will continue to be recognised as a "legitimate form of public control," but the analysis no longer centres on property as such but on "economic power" which must be restrained by subjection to "public control".

THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH FOLLOW from this new outlook are very far-reaching. It is probably the first time that a socialist party has admitted explicitly that the private ownership of the means of production is entitled to "protection and promotion"—"insofar as it does not hinder the construction of an equitable social order." This means that the SPD has dropped the idea that socialism requires the nationalisation of the whole of industry, not only "for the time being" but as a matter of principle.

And it has abandoned just as deliberately the aim of subjecting the whole economy to strict central planning: the Social Democratic Party, we are now told, "accepts the free market, wherever there is real competition". The basic formula is now "as much competition as possible —as much planning as necessary" and the SPD now not only describes free consumer-choice and the free choice of place of employment as "all-important foundations" but also regards free competition and the entrepreneurial initiative as "important elements of social democratic economic policy".

This does not mean that the German Left has made its peace with the existing social order. But it does mean that it has given up the attempt to organise the extremely complicated texture of a modern industrial society on the basis of a single uniform principle. The economic pattern of the future which it now has in mind is a balanced economy in which the private-profit motive is assigned its due place but in which the State is set the task of preventing, by a variety of methods, of which the nationalisation of large industrial complexes is one, the private-profit motive leading to the accumulation of tremendous profits in private hands and the consequent concentration of economic power which is capable of influencing the political sphere. "The control of great economic power is . . . the central task of a libertarian economic policy" are the words used in the section on "Property and Power" which really constitutes the essence of the new programme.

At the same time, however, the events of recent decades have made the German Social Democrats realise that this problem of economic power cannot be disposed of by simply transferring power from private hands into the hands of the State. They have come to see that being dependent on an uncontrollable state bureaucracy is not necessarily better than being dependent on a private capitalist. They therefore maintain that "there are dangers in all concentrations of economic power, even in the hands of the State." The conclusions drawn from this consideration have, however, been laid down in very general and somewhat vague terms: common ownership is to be "organised according to the principles of self government and decentralisation"; in the organisations by which it is administered "the interests of the workers and employees must be

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represented just as much as the public interest and that of the consumers". Furthermore, the SPD declares that it is its aim to create conditions "in which everyone can as a free agent make his own fortune from a rising income"; eventually, the Party regards such fortune-making as a certain—though necessarily limited—counterpoise to the individual's increasing dependence on anonymous social forces. Here—and not only here—the Social Democrat programme has points of contact with certain ideas of a reformed, socially disciplined liberalism. That is probably inevitable if the basic problem is seen as the establishment of a free society which is neither dominated by large-scale capitalism nor one in which the individual is degraded to the position of a mere cog in a coercive state machine. This libertarian approach leads to the wholesale rejection of any idea of coming to terms with the communists. The attitude to democracy has also undergone a corresponding change. The SPD has always been a democratic party—and often enough *the* democratic party in Germany. But whereas it formerly regarded democracy merely as a stage to socialism, it has now come to consider the democratic form of government as having value in itself, as an end in itself and not merely a means to an end. For anyone who lived through the Hitler period or is now engaged in unremitting altercation with the communism which has established its rule in a part of his own country, can no longer regard the democratic state as a merely "transitional" stage.

But the belief in a plural society cannot of course be restricted to economics and politics on their own; those who assent to the activity of various and even contrary forces in economic and political life, will be bound to fight all forms of regimentation and co-ordination in the cultural sphere. Hence the programme deliberately refrains from proclaiming "ultimate truths": neither the state nor a political party should have any power in the field of religious and philosophical principles. Here again we see the same basic characteristic which informs the whole programme: deliberate modesty and restraint. Marxism set out both "to interpret" and "to change the world." The German Social Democrats of today make no claim to provide a universally valid philosophy nor do they believe any longer that their policy is in accord with irrevocable laws of social dynamics. There are probably still many conscious (and even more unconscious) Marxists in their ranks. But they form a minority. The majority are wholly concerned with the problem of so continuing to develop this society that it can be called "wholly of man." The German Left still has a strong conviction that it is on the side of progress, but it is tempered by an unmistakable feeling of scepticism towards all exaggerated, and therefore dangerous, schemes of utopia.

IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE WRONG to see nothing but sturdy electoral opportunism behind the new programme. No doubt, three lost elections in which the conservative forces of the Federal Republic have become increasingly strong, have greatly contributed to this change of outlook. Like the British Labour Party, the SPD has had to face the fact that the traditional mythos of the Labour movement has lost its force in modern affluent society.

In fact, the discussion which for the time being the Godesberg Programme has brought to an end, was already begun in 1953. In the general elections of that year Dr. Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union, which four years previously had only eked out a bare plurality over the Social Democrats, gained an absolute majority in Parliament, thereby becoming the first party to do so in German history (a feat which even the Nazis failed to achieve, at least in free elections). The shock set the forces in motion which have now gained the upper hand in the SPD; the discussion lasted six years.

But the fact that the debate, sometimes conducted in public, sometimes behind the scenes, has lasted so long shows the strength of the opposition with which the zealous party-reformers had to contend. It needed the renewed electoral defeat of 1957 to secure their final victory. This was due above all to the fact that the central core of German Social Democracy is incomparably more "conservative" and more closely connected with the old traditions of the working-class movement than is its fringe: the 600,000 Party members find it incomparably more difficult to free themselves from traditional formulæ and ideas than do the millions of voters; above all, the official cadre on whose ardour and devotion the solid strength of the Party really depends, is distinguished from the mass of the membership by a special brand of ingrained Left-conservatism. When, therefore, in 1953 for the first time leading figures from the ranks of Socialist Parliamentarians came forward with the idea that the Party should cast the "old ballast" overboard and turn itself from a party of the working class into a more broadly-based *"Volkspartei,"* it did not look as if their attack had the slightest chance of succeeding. At the Berlin Party Conference of 1954 the Left-wing (consisting of Marxist, pacifist, anti-militaristic elements) was still counter-attacking successfully and the leading spokesman of the "Reform Group," Professor Carlo Schmid (the Deputy Speaker of the *Bundestag* and a powerful orator), Fritz Erler (the brilliant defence and foreign

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policy expert), and Willy Brandt (later to become Lord Mayor of Berlin), seemed to be in the position of hopeless outsiders. But it was from this initial setback that the intellectual leaders of the "Reformers" learnt their lesson. When they renewed their offensive in 1957 they no longer attacked on a broad front, but concentrated first within the organisation on securing the Party leadership; for a time, ideological conflicts were shelved. At the Stuttgart Party Conference of 1958, they were successful: the influence of the salaried party officials was seriously checked and the Party Executive was streamlined by the creation of a seven-man Praesidium. That is to say: reform of personnel was given priority over reform of policy, and the overhauling of the party machine over that of party doctrine. It was only because the leadership of the Party had passed into the hands of personalities who were open to the new ideas that it was possible to win the Party over in a comparatively short time; the dead-weight of a clumsy bureaucratic *Apparat* having been disposed of, a fresh team of leaders consisting of some of the best minds in the Party succeeded in tackling the reconstruction of the intellectual formulation of Social Democratic policy. Even now, however, the opposition was still considerable. It is true that when it came to the final vote in Bad Godesberg the new programme was adopted with only 16 delegates "against." But this figure is misleading since it was evident in the preceding discussion that a very much stronger and more vocal majority was opposed to certain formulations which were, in their opinion, aimed "too far" in the direction of what has in the classical Socialist discussions been labelled "Revisionism."

Finally, one thing must not be forgotten: not all the supporters of the new programme will interpret the document in the same way. There is an influential group who look at it from the tactical, or, to use the expression that is so popular in post-war Germany, the "optical" point of view: not as a break with a policy that has failed but rather as a new and more intelligible, more elastic formulation of the old policy.

The leading exponent of this group is the Deputy Party Leader Herbert Wehner: he is certainly one of the strongest political influences in German Socialism, at the same time one of the most controversial, a kind of Nye Bevan, with all Bevan's passion if without his oratorical brilliance. It is only their alliance with Wehner that has enabled the reformers to get their ideas accepted; it was only the burning sincerity with which this former leading Communist attacked the radicalism of some of the Left-wingers that persuaded many delegates to overcome their doubts in Bad Godesberg. But Wehner himself sees in the programme above all a politically necessary attempt to clothe old Socialist ideas in a more attractive garb, more in accordance with present-day German mentality, without violating their essential nature. He is too much a true believer of the old Socialist school to jettison any fundamental tenets of Marxism, but he is also too astute a politician not to realise that at present the important thing for the Social Democrats is to abandon their rôle as a "permanent minority," and that they can succeed in this only if they speak a language which takes into account the present idiosyncrasies of a prosperous middle-class Germany. Wehner went all-out on behalf of a programme about which he feels differently than some of his more adaptable comrades who take the view that the failures of Socialism in the continental country that was once its stronghold must be interpreted as a sign that "the old theories no longer fit the new reality."

But the failures of socialism in the continental country that was once its stronghold must be interpreted as a sign that the old theories no longer fit the new reality. Nevertheless, the Godesberg programme is a very serious and very consistent attempt to take this fact into account and, to use Marxist phraseology, to bring "consciousness" more in harmony with "social reality." The German Social Democrats have given up Marxism not because it has become "unpopular" but because their defeats have made them realise that it is utterly impossible to tackle the world of to-day and the tasks of to-morrow with an intellectual instrument of yesterday.

One key-question remains. However "realistic" the new programme may be—will it have anything of the "fire and passion" that emanated from Marxian utopianism and chiliasm? If the differences between Socialist and bourgeois politics become only a matter of degree, Socialism may look forward to recruiting new friends and voters and to take up the struggle for power with greater hope of success—but will it not have to pay for this victory with a loss of impetus and militancy? The Godesberg Programme "demythologises" the ideology of German Socialism so thoroughly that one cannot help wondering whether it will be able to mobilise the emotional forces by which the old Socialist movement was sustained and developed and from which it drew a good deal of its inner strength. Only the next few years will show whether the new "popular breadth" (so hoped for and so necessary for success) which the German Left now promises itself will be able to compensate for the possible loss of old-style emotional depth.

F. R. Allemann

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"One Man, One Vote . . ."

By Richard Wollheim

MR. IRVING KRISTOL, in his review of Alastair Buchan's new biography of Walter Bagehot [ENCOUNTER, December], raises an interesting theoretical issue about Democracy and its demands, which should not go undiscussed.

Bagehot, Mr. Kristol argues, was a democrat. So we are all nowadays. But Bagehot was something that is rare in this age, though not so rare in his days: he was a democrat who did not "believe in" democracy, a democrat who "displayed a powerful detachment from the democracy he was committed to," a democrat without fanaticism or apocalyptic enthusiasm. He was a "sane" democrat. And it is because he was a sane and not a messianic democrat that he was able to see something that has been systematically obscured in this century: namely, that Democracy is perfectly compatible with a limitation or restriction of the suffrage.

The question arises, then: *Is* Democracy compatible with a limited suffrage? Is the link that is ordinarily supposed to hold between Democracy and universal suffrage genuinely the case, or is it merely the invention of "demagogy" and "prejudice"?

Mr. Kristol's arguments (if I understand him aright) would appear to be that Democracy *must be* compatible with a limited suffrage because it is an incontrovertible fact that many people are too ignorant or too immature to exercise reasonable political authority. The democrat—the argument runs—must either deny the existence of such people, or else he must admit into his democratic theory the possibility of denying them the vote. But, of course, the argument as it stands, is invalid. Democracy may be compatible with a limited suffrage, but this is not the way to prove it. For the proper conclusion to draw from the instances Mr. Kristol has in mind may be that in such cases Democracy is inapplicable, not that it is applicable in a limited or attenuated form.

To some this may seem a mere battle of words. Does it matter whether we call a government with a limited suffrage a Democracy, or a limited Democracy, or a non-Democracy? If we all agree that this limitation on the suffrage is justified, surely the question of what label we apply to the resultant political form is of no significance?

The battle, I submit, is not one of words. It is one of principles. It relates to the principles defining how the suffrage is granted and the conditions under which it may be restricted.

For Democracy *is*, of course, compatible with a restricted suffrage. There I agree with Mr. Kristol. In Athens, where, after all, Democracy was invented, slaves, foreigners, and women were excluded from any part in political life. In Great Britain to-day (which I regard as a democracy) no one under the age of twenty-one is given a vote.

But though Democracy is consistent with a restricted suffrage, it is not consistent with any and every way of restricting the suffrage. One way in particular it excludes: and that way is, ironically enough, the way that was found acceptable by Bagehot and to which, if I am not mistaken, Mr. Kristol takes no exception. It is one of the leading principles of democracy that no one shall be excluded from a voice in the political process simply on the ground that he lacks, or is deficient in, the requisite political skill or prudence. And this is so because, according to the democrat, there is no such thing as political skill or prudence in the relevant sense. To put it another way, the issues of politics are such that in no single case can any man claim, in virtue of the content or character of that issue, that his opinion is worthier than, or superior to, another man's. In opposition both to the aristocratic and to the technological view of the matter, the theory of Democracy asserts that there are no political experts.

The expression "in virtue of the character or content of the issue" is, of course, crucial here. It is possible to have a democracy in which people are excluded from citizenship on moral or intellectual or practical grounds: we exclude children, and imbeciles, and peers. Any such exclusion is highly debatable, but the debate about it is not a debate to which Democracy is a party. The question of Democracy arises at a later stage: it arises when after the citizenship has been delimited on general grounds, we come to the question of the suffrage, and someone proposes that we should make a further delimitation by dividing the population into those who possess political prudence and those who don't, and award the vote only to the former. Such a suggestion offends deeply against a venerable principle of political theory which, in the light of its historical rôle, we may suitably call "the democratic principle."

In support of what I say, I might refer to the history of democratic institutions in Anglo-Saxon countries. The history of such institutions is bound up with the maxim *"No taxation without representation."* What in effect this meant was that no one

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was thought deserving of representation unless he bore the burden of taxation. The theory is a harsh one, but since it does not (overtly at any rate) exclude from representation anyone on the ground of his political ineptitude, it does not offend against the principle of democracy. It restricts Democracy unduly, but it does not negate it. For the negation of Democracy we have to go, for instance, to the view of the colonial administration in Central Africa, so brilliantly and concisely exposed in the Devlin Report; or again to the view that Mr. Kristol appears to admire in Bagehot.

The democratic principle—namely, the principle that on any political issue one man's opinion is as deserving of respect as another's—may seem to many to stand in need of defence. Certainly many have attacked it. Traditionalists, for instance, claim that there *is* a special kind of political skill essential for political rule, and that this skill is the hereditary preserve of an aristocracy or caste. Such a claim seems historically unjustified, and moreover if there is such a skill, rare and precious in itself, it seems odd that it should require for its survival conditions of great luxury and indolence.

Again, there are more serious critics of the democratic principle who claim as an evident fact that there are certain political issues (*e.g.*, those concerned with foreign affairs or economic policy) in respect of which it just isn't the case that one man's opinion is as good as another. Where *these* critics are certainly right is in bringing out the fact that the democratic principle is acceptable only if a certain limitation is placed upon the notion of "a political issue": and this in turn demands the prior acceptance by politicians of certain "democratic" obligations, *viz.*, that they will place before the electorate only issues of a certain generality, and further that these "issues" will consist not just of a series of propositions but also of the arguments in support of these propositions. But I have no intention of conducting a general defence of the democratic principle.

My objection to Bagehot and to those who would instal him as a serious thinker is that he made no attempt to deal with the issues of democratic theory systematically. He was a very clever man, and a very sophisticated man, and supremely a man of the world. As a result of these qualities, not to be underestimated, he was able to say a lot of sharp and amusing and illuminating things. His writings constitute a most civilised table-talk in the margin of politics, and for those who admire in equal measure wit and power, they will always be possessed of a certain charm and glamour. But place the "masculine" Bagehot beside the "feminine" John Stuart Mill, only for a moment, and we see that whereas Bagehot was robust and amusing, Mill was cool and thoughtful. It is some kind of fashion nowadays to deride Mill. I do not see why. Mill, seriously, persistently, honestly, over the years, tried to resolve certain central problems in the theory of politics; these problems are difficult, and he often failed; and when he failed, he came back to the problem. He was quite often wrong, quite often right, and never smug or evasive. In contrast, Bagehot was a gifted *boulevardier*.

. . . and a Reply

MR. WOLLHEIM'S comment on my review of Alastair Buchan's biography of Bagehot raises so many interesting points of political theory that a book would be needed to treat of them all. What I should like to do here is simply to clarify some aspects of the political idea of democracy which Mr. Wollheim seems, unintentionally no doubt, to have obscured:

(1) Democratic government, all will agree, must be government by consent. The *form* in which such consent is expressed is the suffrage. But democratic government is not merely a formal arrangement; the idea of democracy is not exhausted by referring to the people as the source of authority. As has been seen in our day, it is quite possible to have universal suffrage without democracy—*e.g.*, Russia, Egypt, Mexico, to mention only a few instances. Democratic government must also be defined—if such a definition is to be meaningful—in terms of its purpose, its end, which is equality and liberty under the rule of law.

Now it is not always possible to achieve this end under the conditions of universal suffrage; and in such cases a limitation on the suffrage can hardly be called a limitation of democracy. On the contrary: it might well be a precondition of democracy. Bagehot opposed extending the suffrage to the entire male working class because he felt that the consequences of such an act would be to undermine parliamentary government itself, by throwing the door open to radical demagogy and class war. He was wrong, as he himself later admitted. But there was nothing "un-democratic" or "anti-democratic" in his position.

(2) The common sense of the matter recognises that universal suffrage is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of democracy. Here, the issue of the women's vote is revealing. To deny the vote to women is certainly to restrict the franchise. Yet Switzerland does so—and who would say that Switzerland is not a democracy? The United States did so before 1919—was it a "limited democracy" up to that time? I suppose one could say so; but one would then be remarkably silly.

Ah, Mr. Wollheim rejoins,

> "though democracy is consistent with a restricted suffrage, it is not consistent with any and every way of restricting the suffrage. One way in particular it excludes: and that way is, ironically enough, the way that was found acceptable by Bagehot and to which, if I am not mistaken, Mr. Kristol takes no exception. It is one of the leading principles of democracy that no one shall be excluded from a voice in the political process simply on the grounds that he lacks, or is deficient in, the requisite political skill or prudence."

I can hardly believe that Mr. Wollheim believes what he appears to be saying. Which is: if you restrict the suffrage for non-political reasons—excluding, say, all albinos or stutterers or psychoanalysts—this is not an infringement of the democratic principle. Whereas if you deny the right to

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vote to a certain class of people because you are persuaded they are incapable of exercising it intelligently, then you are perpetrating such a violation. This is clearly absurd. And what seems to have led Mr. Wollheim to such an absurdity is his conviction that "there is no such thing as political skill or prudence in the relevant sense," and that "the issues of politics are such that in no single case can any man claim . . . that his opinion is worthier than, or superior to, another man's." This, he insists, is the root principle of democracy. Fortunately, he is in error. Were it the root principle of democracy, our cause would be lost, since it is in obvious and flagrant contradiction to the truth that some men's opinions *are*, on many issues, worthier than or superior to other men's.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Wollheim needs, like a notable precursor in his field, to be stood on his head. The *only* permissible limitation on the suffrage in a democracy is that which is related to the moral and intellectual capability of people to exercise it. That is why men convicted of certain crimes lose their vote; and that is why there is an age limit below which citizens are disenfranchised.

(3) It was once thought that the vote should be restricted to those who owned a certain amount of property, or paid a certain minimum in rent or taxes—the assumption being that the others were too inadequately informed of, too remote from, political problems to have an opinion worth considering. This assumption was invalidated by changes in the nature and distribution of "property," and above all by the spread of education and "popular enlightenment." But I do not see that it was an "un-democratic" assumption to make at that time, under those circumstances. Would England be a democratic country to-day if King John had been able to rally the illiterate and superstitious masses against the barons? Or if James II had been able to mobilise the women's vote in his support?

For most Western nations, all this is to-day largely of academic interest. Except for the criminals and the young, there are no classes of the population that are obvious political incompetents. But this is not the case in other countries—in Africa, Asia, and Latin America; and there the unthinking equation of democracy with universal suffrage can have the most disastrous consequences. I do not see how parliamentary democracy can ever evolve and survive in those countries if what Jefferson called "the natural aristocracy of talent" has no experience of the responsibilities of government. Or, what comes to much the same thing, if these people have to devote all their intellectual energy to the demagogic manipulation of an illiterate mass electorate through corrupt party machines.

I would also like to observe that Mr. Wollheim's beloved Mill advocated a multiple vote for the educated class in England. The proposal is no longer relevant, the educated class being what it now is. But Mill was not "un-democratic" in conceiving the idea. He was simply and sensibly trying to make the system of parliamentary democracy achieve its purposes more effectively.

Irving Kristol

Last chance

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The "T.L.S." Instructs the Elite

on the American Imagination — By LESLIE FIEDLER

IT MUST be difficult, I like to think, for any literate Englishman (especially one under forty) to appreciate the regard in which the *Times Literary Supplement* is held in American faculty circles. Ezra Pound, fresh from his brief encounter with life in the American college, may have understood immediately on his arrival in England that the pages of the *T.L.S.* were the very mother-lode of academic inanity; but his colleagues, who remained behind, even forty years later still dutifully take it, read it through, and dream of some day writing a letter which its editors will accept for publication. A "scholarly" letter in the *T.L.S.*, it must be understood, *counts* as a bibliographical item, may mean a promotion or a raise. What especially intrigues the Assistant Professor of Classics in Nebraska or the young Instructor in Florida who has just finished a thesis on the coinage of the Early Byzantine Empire is the notion that the latest work in his "field," written by one of its two reigning old men—both of whom he, of course, hates—is likely to be icily, only half-politely, and at great length destroyed in the *T.L.S.* by the other.

In the United States, such genteel mayhem (inhibited by the fact that it can never be anonymous) is carried on only in certain professional journals which are subscribed to chiefly by libraries and are scarcely read by those other nominal subscribers who get them automatically when they pay their dues to one academic organisation or another. "The deadliest of weapons," the brighter young men are pleased to call the journal in their own field; and they wield it, with all the aggression stored up in graduate school (and which might in England have been more profitably invested in an article for the *T.L.S.*), to kill flies!

The mere thought of being *invited* to appear anonymously in a journal sold at news-stands, of being held in the hands of its numerous readers (I do not know how many Americans are aware that the circulation of the *T.L.S.* is somewhere around 33,000; I rather fancy some imaginations do better), of being paid, however modestly, for one's contribution—this is, for frustrated American faculty members, a titillation of the loftiest sort. It is difficult to live the academic life in America, to do the sort of "research" which becomes suspect as soon as it is saleable, and to know all the time that there is a vast market-place in which fabulous prices are paid for pieces written with much less time and effort and accuracy, and not even much more grace than are invested in work which, at best, will help ensure every third year a raise of, say, $500 *per annum*. To be paid for writing in America, one must, on the orthodox academic scale, descend; in professorial eyes, only the *T.L.S.* is, unlike its nearest American counterparts, sound and respectable—as well as solvent.

Add to this the fact that it upholds—grammatically, even elegantly—the same middlebrow values as those of J. Donald Adams and all the past presidents of the Modern Language Association of America and one will have seized the secret of its *cachet*. What upper-philistine publication in the United States could have so superbly timed a smug hostility to the early poetry of T. S. Eliot, an invitation to him to contribute critical articles, and an enthusiastic reception of his work when he was at last safely *in*? What lower-philistine journal could have ticked off in a single year Katherine Anne Porter ("If there is no pattern, there is no focus for the attention and, in the end, no sense"), Marianne Moore ("its cultivated refusals and subtle detachments are poison to us"), and Groddeck's *Book of the It* ("We are unregenerate enough to admit that it made us slightly sick")? It is all there: the attack on stream-of-consciousness experimentalism, *avant-garde*

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obscurity in poetry, and the nasty-mindedness of the Freudians. What more could any old-line "scholar" in the Humanities, the Social Sciences, or the Arts, nostalgic for Anglo-Saxon 19th-century "decency," demand?

He could in fact, demand only a little less, *i.e.*, the absence of a much deplored "anti-Americanism," which amounts in fact to an almost compulsive harping in the pages of the *T.L.S.* on the gaucheness of American scholarship, the ineptitude of the prose employed by its middlebrow opposite numbers in the United States. A couple of years ago, F. W. Bateson took up this matter (not without a certain double condescension of his own: "The *T.L.S.* reviewer . . . *must* resent and deplore the uncouth jargon of much modern American writing, if he is to be true to his own literary ideals. . . .") in *Essays in Literary Criticism*, even quoting an American protest against what Bateson himself was willing to call "at its worst . . . cultural snobbery." They seem to me perfectly complementary, however—the vaguely Anglophile cultural aspiration from one side, and the more than slightly Americanophobe cultural snobbery from the other; and they will, I suppose, never stop resounding to each other across the Atlantic, deep calling unto deep.

In 1955, however, there was a whole *Special Supplement* of the *T.L.S.* devoted to American Literature and last winter another dedicated to the examination of the American imagination;* signs surely of a truce! Yet even in the columns of the special issue of November 6th, the routine donnish slap on the American wrist is being administered by one of the regular reviewers, who comments on an American study of Smollett: "Dr. Goldberg's book is much better than his aberrations about a clothes-motif would suggest, and no doubt we should have been spared those if hunting the symbol had not become a favourite academic game in the English departments of American universities." It is not finally a question of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing; the *T.L.S.* strikes me as a publication edited with all the rigour, say, of *Time* magazine, so that the left hand is not merely aware of what the right is up to, it is rewriting its copy!

The *T.L.S.* may have decided, twice over in four years, to go about redeeming the American arts, but it cannot go about it without seeming to imply that the job had somehow never been properly done, and, indeed, never could be on the wrong side of the ocean. However late he may have decided to join the world-wide chorus which acclaims American art, Mr. Alan Pryce-Jones is obviously convinced that there is still a great deal for his stable of "distinguished authors" to say on the subject; and it is perhaps for this reason that he has chosen to make of the issue on the American Imagination his valedictory as editor of the *T.L.S.* Mr. Stanley Morison, his predecessor, was recently reported in *Esquire* as having noted that America "doesn't have a damned thing with which to instruct its élite"; and Mr. Pryce-Jones is apparently taking up on cue the last white man's burden by instructing that American élite about its own culture.

In a throwaway, signed with his name, and distributed before the appearance of the *Special Supplement* to a large sample of American professors, the editor reminds those professors that the *New York Times* had hailed his first special number as "illuminating for us . . . because of the fresh perspective." This tribute to past missionary activities is sandwiched between a particularly blatant piece of flattery ("You are a person to whom . . . contemporary literature means something—otherwise this letter would not have been directed to you") and a strictly commercial appeal, urging the recipient to give the *Times Literary Supplement* for Christmas and to note the book ads in the back pages. But there is a second enclosure which returns to the missionary note, insisting for a final time on the small investment necessary to bring to the unenlightened American a realisation of "how unprejudiced English writers view American achievements." There is a charming air of self-righteousness about the whole business, an ingenuous satisfaction on the part of all concerned with being able not only to sell books for publishers and subscriptions for the old firm but at the same time to right a distressing wrong: "The American Way of Life is not always received abroad with the acclaim it deserves," Mr. Pryce-Jones' copy-writer affirms sadly; and to prove that he, at least, honours that American Way, draws upon Carl Sandburg to make the point that *"in the dust, in the cool tombs . . ."* the "genius" of America will be remembered after her "commercials are forgotten"; which is cool enough, considering that the quotation is embedded in a text itself a "commercial."

What is memoralised by the *Supplements*, early and late, is a *détente* in the Cultural Cold War between England and America—not a cease-fire along the whole front, but a decision to down arms on the part of the British subcommunity to which Mr. Pryce-Jones belongs (let's call it, mythically, the last remnants of Bloomsbury). For better or worse, hostility to

* *Special Supplement on The American Imagination, Its Strength and Scope*, November 6th, 1959.

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the art of America is no longer *chic*; anti-Americanism has been surrendered to popular fiction, to the entertainments of Graham Greene, for instance, where it fills a vacuum left by the disappearance of an even more outrageously unfashionable anti-Semitism. I am inescapably reminded of a phrase spoken, I believe, by a character in one of Angus Wilson's novels, to the effect that he would find it "under-bred" to boast of not owning a television set. So apparently it has come to seem "under-bred" to speak disparagingly of Faulkner or Jackson Pollock or Marianne Moore; though it was not very much more than five years ago that an American writer submitting a manuscript to a British critical journal was told by the editor that "no one" ever read Dreiser, and that "we" do not, like some Americans, consider Hemingway a "classic."

But the time for such classic snubs is over; and it is perhaps as ungracious to remember them as to observe that the British are the last Europeans to confess that "the flowering of the American imagination has been the chief event in the sphere of living art since the end of the First World War." Whatever the initial reluctance to make such a confession, we are told, there are now *four* Chairs of American Literature in England and *two* special issues of the *T.L.S.*, the latest of which contends that there would be "little point . . . for going deeply into the reasons for this reluctance, or in berating ourselves." It is all a little bewildering to an American, convinced that the way to understanding is precisely through self-examination and even, on occasion, self-reproach. Such an American will insist at least on noting that no significant younger British writer has yet been as deeply influenced by an American as, say, Camus by Hemingway or Cesare Pavese by Sherwood Anderson. And he will further observe that a novelist like Kingsley Amis, committed to American jazz, American movies, and American science-fiction—remains cheerfully and quite unmaliciously ignorant of American literature, stating in print, for instance, that William Faulkner lacks a sense of humour!

It is a boner equalled only by the assertion in the current *Supplement* that, with two exceptions, one major, one minor, the religious instinct "seems to have bypassed almost entirely classical American literature." Yet anyone wondering about the roots of such ignorance or about the strange *unavailability* of the American imagination to the British will find no answers in the *T.L.S.*, where such questions are not even posed. What he will find instead is a general panegyric of American energy and American copiousness—not without certain overtones of condescension and resentment. The image of American virility is constantly, even disturbingly projected, and carries with it a counter-image of British impotence and the spite proper to that impotence.

Though the reader of the *Special Supplement* will find before he has gone very far the proposition that an assertion "that American literature is a great literature needs no arguing now," he will discover that proposition qualified everywhere: sometimes by disagreements between one article and another; but often by counter-statements within a single article and even a single sentence. The author of the piece on the novel, for instance, will praise the achievement of our writers of long fiction, especially Faulkner, who is granted almost heroic stature in some of these pages. But the writer entrusted with the short story argues that the American novelist is "garrulous" and that "he tends to imitate his own engineers, and think of the novel in terms of the Empire State Building or the George Washington Bridge. . . ."

YET EVERYWHERE THERE ARE SIGNS of an editorial resolve to impose the semblance of unity—at least in the sensitive final paragraphs of each article if nowhere else. Formally or informally, the word must have been passed that "upendings" were desirable; and scarcely a single essay fails, sometimes with evident signs of struggle, to hit an affirmative note at the close. Not only are our poets praised and our storytellers; but our most recent painters are approved ("In an age that has tended to think only of American materialism, the action painter . . . has kept alive a faith in the perennial qualities of disinterested values. . . ."), our system of mass education on the university level ("The social decision has been made in America and not all its consequences are bad. . . ."), even our scholarship ("Whatever else may be said about American scholarship, one must grant it the quality of copiousness"). Once this most difficult of concessions has been made, there is no stopping the affable onslaught of acceptance. Advertising itself is justified, presumably against its American detractors ("The imagination which has gone into the creation of advertising is well employed—though one could wish, etc., etc."); the movies, despite certain reservations, given their meed of honour ("The American film hero often represents the generality of mankind at its dullest and stupidest. . . . He is, however, 'put over' with astonishing technical skill, skill so unfailing and self-confident that it almost amounts to genius. Perhaps it is genius. . . ."); and the musical play much more unreservedly hailed ("There is no sign meanwhile that its enviable confidence in itself is misplaced").

This is by no means the climax, however; for

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not only has Mr. Pryce-Jones found a critic willing to take quite seriously the slick banalities of *My Fair Lady* and *West Side Story*; he has found one eager to contend with Adlai Stevenson himself in defence of American television. Mr. Stevenson, the critic charges, is guilty of the "egghead fallacy which invalidates so much of the bill of complaint against our mass media entertainments." The fallacy which has laid poor Mr. Stevenson open to the charge of being an intellectual is his belief that most watchers of TV find little pleasure in their addiction—a contention easier for me to believe than the critic's observation that "though not favourable to works of the imagination greatly conceived . . . ," television provides a commodity "of relative goodness and vast copiousness; it is better entertainment than most people could get elsewhere. . . ." On these grounds, one might equally defend, I presume, *The Reader's Digest*, *Look*, and *The Ladies' Home Journal*. The fact that most American artists have had always to define themselves *against* those mass media is noted here and there in the *Special Supplement*; but elsewhere there is a tendency to suggest that an acceptance of the American Imagination demands an acceptance of middlebrow, mass-produced, pseudo-art. "Entertainment" is a euphemism meant to avoid all embarrassing questions; and I cannot help when I see the word remembering Charles Van Doren's explanation of his fall: "He told me . . . that it was only entertainment."

Indeed, a certain simple-minded duplicity (disguised by the apparent variety and range of the articles) is basic to the approach of the *Special Supplement*. To counter-balance, for instance, the deprecation of the obtuse egghead in its articles devoted to popular culture, the *T.L.S.* has adopted wholesale the current egghead line in its treatment of more serious American literature. One suspects that the authors entrusted with the key-pieces on fiction, poetry, painting, and the dance are young exchange students only lately given The Word in, say, the Ivy League Graduate Schools or in the Indiana School of Letters. Not only is a good deal of ambivalent attention paid to the Beats, on whose neo-Romanticism there is yet no accepted line; but the whole view of the past, classic and recent, has been revised in light of the revolution which the last decade or two has worked in the canon of American works. The *In-and-Out* Game is played with consummate skill. "Everyone" knows that Hemingway is not so *In* as Faulkner and the *T.L.S.* reviewer knows it, too; just as "everyone" knows that the poetry of Melville is *In*, and that of the 17th-century Edward Taylor (whose "Huswifery" is quoted in full) is even more esoterically *In*. So

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"everyone" knows, too, that Poe's *Gordon Pym* is *In* and "The Cask of Amontillado" *Out*; that Cooper is struggling to make it *In* to the place which Melville and Faulkner define, but that he has not quite succeeded; and these shifts are also sensitively registered. And finally "everybody" knows that Symbolism has been *In* just a little too securely for just a little too long, and that it is time to say something nice about Realism again; and even this the *T.L.S.* has found someone to do.

It is a little embarrassing for me to discover that part of the tribute paid to eggheadism in these pages accrues to me; and that some of my theories about American literature at least now seem sufficiently venerable and harmless to be summarised by the *T.L.S.* boys. In one case, the summary is carried off with all the proper acknowledgements and with sufficient grace to keep me from wincing at my own image (let me say shamelessly that the piece on "The Jewish Part in American Letters," which takes up certain cues from me, is by all odds the best article in the issue); but in another, it is perpetrated without even a nod in my direction and with little ingenuity or incisiveness. In the first essay, there is a reference to my "more notorious study of the homosexual implications of American Innocence in general and of *Moby Dick* and *Huckleberry Finn* in particular"; and precisely that "notorious study" is taken as gospel in the second, which develops the arguments of my "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey," citing them in their original order, buttressing them with the same quotations I adduce, echoing my very turns of phrase.

I am not making, let me be clear, any charges of plagiarism, only registering dismay at having come to seem to some, before I have ceased striking others as offensive, the source of certain well-established clichés. Actually, if my patiently propagated notions about the unredeemed guilts felt by white Americans towards Indian and Negro and the dream of an innocent all-male community in which those guilts are resolved had been allowed out of Mr. Pryce-Jones' highbrow ghetto into the areas he allotted to the lower levels of American culture, new light might have been shed where only shadow is now cast. Both the writer on movies and the one on television fail, for instance, to make sense of the Westerns and their strange persistence, because, first of all, they both refuse to consider the fear and dis-ease which underlie the more obvious nostalgia of such mythic projections; and because they are not able, in the second place, to contrast that fear and dis-ease with the equal and opposite emotions stirred in Americans by the contemplation of the European "East." Indeed, even in its egghead columns, the *T.L.S.* only inadequately treats the long history of American ambivalence towards the European world of experience and evil, left behind in the pursuit of a retreating Western horizon of innocence.

Everywhere in the *Special Supplement*, there is an awareness of the American conviction that "all good things can be deliberately procured. . . ." and that the attainment of the Good Life is, therefore, largely a matter of logistics; but nowhere is there clearly recognised the complementary American sense that those good things which *can* be procured (the American Imagination will not accept the easy out of defeatism or cynicism) are, in fact, *not*; and that, therefore, all Americans feel themselves guilty for failing the dream that they cannot cease dreaming without ceasing to be themselves. Had the *T.L.S.* managed to express a realisation of this dilemma, it would have made clear why the American writer has traditionally had forced on him the rôle, not of the Rebel (which is the way one *T.L.S.* writer puts it), but of the Public Accuser in the Great Trial which is American life.

Had the *Special Supplement* been clear on this score, its readers would have understood further the need for analagous self-scrutiny and self-condemnation in the large sub-literate public, which, lacking great works of art to make the charge it demands be filed against it ("Thou wast not brave! Thou wast not true!"), entrusts that charge to the Grand Jury, the Congressional Investigator, the F.B.I. It is as necessary to that public to learn that its witch-hunters are corrupt as to discover that its intellectuals are witches. The exposure *of* McCarthyism, that is to say, satisfies the same deep inner necessity as the exposures *by* McCarthy; and both are part of a continuous process, whose beginnings in my living memory go back to the exposé of the "Munitions Makers," and whose end is not yet. Rigged quiz shows, the payola of disc jockeys, fixed scales in the New York meat-markets (who but an American could pretend to discover with horror—and as if for the first time—that *butchers cheat!*), poisoned spray on Thanksgiving cranberries, high prices in drugstores, cancer-inducing chemicals in cigarettes—all provide occasions for the inevitable verdict: Guilty as charged!

It is surely an *essential* function of television in the United States (as the cheerily superficial article on the subject in the *T.L.S.* does not reveal) to have brought into the American living-room the Symbolic Trial, the Great Hearing before which, in its deepest imagination, the American Great Audience stands. Most notably,

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perhaps, the McCarthy hearings, but also the Kefauver investigations, and—only yesterday—the hushed moment, utterly unprivate (no cameras could help taking pictures of other cameras as well as of the subject, the eye seeing not only what it beheld, but, in token, all the other beholders), when Charles Van Doren became a final hero to his TV public by confessing that he had all along been guilty; and that public responded as if *this* were the show they had really been waiting for from the beginning—the early triumphs felt, even before anyone knew it, only as the first acts of a tragedy, the preparation for a Reversal and Recognition without which the whole thing would have remained just "entertainment."

That the author of the *T.L.S.* essay on television does not even mention the quiz shows is a final clue to his obtuseness (deliberately assumed in the interests of international amity? or out of his fear of seeming "under-bred"?) about what that medium—in the United States, at least—really offers. For TV without quizzes is not only *Hamlet* without the Prince (Charles Van Doren, who, before a breathless nation, hesitates, or perhaps only *seems* to hesitate), but without Ophelia (the glittering, well-stacked girl who leads him by the arm to the Isolation Booth, where he acts out his previously rehearsed fall), without Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (the unspeakably obsequious Hal Marches and Jack Barrys shamming wonder before his madness)—even without Claudius (the unseen Sponsor of it all!). And here, muffed once again, is another clue to the essential American imagination. For the quiz show represents something far more complex than the desire to get-rich-quick, which is the province of the Give-Away, presided over, not by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, but by the Fairy Godmother.

The Quiz is a game invented not only to sell cosmetics, but to present symbolically, as it were, the spectacle of the Intellectual at work, of scholarship itself (in an *ersatz* form immediately recognisable to the average watcher beside his set) for once magnificently rewarded. In the end, "Twenty-One" came improbably to represent America's effort to respond to those signs which, on buses, street-cars, subways, urge it to raise its teachers' salaries. It is no accident that before the *genre* had run its course, it had come to involve the great families of American intellectual and artistic life, the sister of Leonard Bernstein, the son of Mark Van Doren. At first, its producers underestimated their audience, judging that what it wanted was the Freak, or, at best, the Hidden Wiseman. And so we were presented with an array of immigrant gardeners who were experts on American History; pro-

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MACMILLAN

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vincial preachers who knew all about cool jazz; half-senile cleaning-ladies who knew the Bible by heart; balding and shabby stock-clerks with encyclopædic memories; little children with the faces of Talmudic scholars who could recite the Stock Market quotations for the past fifty years.

Indeed, before the current Quiz Shows were invented, the latter types already flourished—in a naïve world that thrilled to the award of an *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Known simply as The Quiz Kids, they were the remote beginning of it all: earnest, a little too eager, a little too smug —but how mature beside their juvenile announcer, condescending and unaware that he played the fool. They belong to our own vanished childhood now and have assumed the status of myths, though once they were merely pains-in-the-neck, The Good Boy and the Good Girl Next Door blown up to heroic size, and held up by parents as evidence that, after all, it *pays* to study, *pays* to know. Even to-day, the revelation of what minor skullduggery went on in their programme is kept buried in the back pages of the newspaper, out of sight. What would J. D. Salinger (and the upper-middle-brows to whom he represents the hope of the novel) do if they were taken away from him in their legendary purity and brilliance; for in his work, the Quiz Kids, re-imagined as a single precocious family called Glass, have been permitted to grow up, to pass from a time of exemplary triumph to one of exemplary suffering. And beside them, the whole dull, fully adult, sexually-obsessed world is revealed as savourless and corrupt. But if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted!

It took a long time for the organisers of the television quiz programmes to realise precisely what had been, in the dead days of radio, the real appeal of the Quiz Kids; to see that it had lain not in the mere discrepancy between their size and their knowledge but in their having been, on a juvenile level, versions of the Intellectual. Charles Van Doren was the Quiz Kid grown up; and the latter-day Quizzes found in him their culmination as well as their death. His victories and his ordeal together constitute the drama which an Aristotle would have called the natural fruition of the form; and before it, a public, which would not have understood the word, experienced a true catharsis. A college professor, paid less than five thousand dollars a year, a relative of other college professors and novelists and poets, handsome in that special modest American way (shared with, say, Charles Lindbergh, Alger Hiss, and John Kennedy), Van Doren became for the Great Audience the Good Intellectual, for whom they wished week after week Good Fortune (and their wishes once known *had* to come true), thus making amends to those other intellectuals, like Van Doren underpaid, but unlike him too proud or too insecure to provide weekly amusement in the parlour.

It was not only the sins of the anti-intellectual audience, however, that Van Doren took away. To the producers, the staff, the mass-entertainment employees who had gone to Harvard or Cal Tech or the University of Chicago, and who —like him—continued to tell themselves that they really "wanted to be a writer and a teacher of literature," he represented a last chance to redeem themselves from the endless self-reproaches they carried back and forth with them on the commuter trains to Westport. They were no longer (it must have seemed to them) just earning a living, just selling soap. They were redeeming the intellectual life for the mass audience. Certainly, this was what they told young Van Doren, and certainly, this was what he believed: believed improbably that retailing scraps of uncoordinated and largely inconsequential information could, in some mysterious way, *stand for* the scholarly life, bring creative activity into good repute. A dull and palpable self-deceit, it seems from the outside; and here surely (not in the later rigging of answers which, granted the first step, was inevitable), in his willingness to associate his family and academic prestige with a child's game—to further confound the public's willingness to confuse fact and wisdom —was his essential guilt.

But he was surrounded by examples of analagous self-deceit and moral trifling. Had not Clifton Fadiman, another graduate of Columbia, whom Charles' father had praised even in his student days for "his gift of mimicry and... fund of knowledge," already pandered to the same public confusion with impunity (and for piddling stakes) on *Information Please*? And did not a professor from Rutgers draw questions out of a hat on a famous comedian's quiz show, while one from California had learned to make even Shakespeare palatable to the masses? What, indeed, was the real difference between any of these accommodations and those eminently respectable (sometimes insufferably boring) conversations about Great Literature which had been broadcast for years, with the collaboration of the whole academic community, under the title of "Invitation to Learning"? If Van Doren would be paid a good deal better than most of those who before him had invited the mass audience to learning, this would merely mean that better than most he was satisfying both aspects of an American dream, reaching hitherto unavailable ears and gaining thereby hitherto unavailable rewards. For a moment, it must

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have seemed to him that he had touched that Great Audience, the awareness of whose presence (ever educated—theoretically at least—to a higher level, ever granted more leisure, ever blessed by a rising standard of living) is one of the profoundest determinants of the shape of the American imagination.

To be sure, an immense industry exists to provide for that Audience certain lower and middling substitutes for culture; but the serious artist, nodding over the best-seller lists, cannot help dreaming that he, too, might some day break through, claim the Audience's attention and tribute—if not without compromise, at least with only minimum concessions. Nathanael West and Scott Fitzgerald heading for Hollywood in the 'thirties, James Agee or Whitaker Chambers joining the staff of *Time Inc.* in the 'forties, Charles Van Doren on *Twenty-One*, or Norman Mailer on Mike Wallace's programme in the 'fifties: all represent the same foolish hope and the same noble defeat; and each debouches in a confession which crowns and justifies the foredoomed experiment. Yet there is a fall from the incomplete *The Last Tycoon* of Fitzgerald and West's *Day of the Locust*, through Chambers' *Witness* and Mailer's *Advertisements for Myself* to Van Doren's statement before a Congressional Committee, repeated in substance to the cameras waiting outside the closed hearing. The Confession that, at its best, becomes the work of art wrested from art's failure peters out in our time into journalism, and, at last, one more TV attraction. It is the final indignity for all of us that Van Doren confess without real illumination and that his moment of truth be as shallowly public as his career of illusory triumph. Like the Leopold and Loeb trials and that of Alger Hiss, Van Doren's appearance before the Court of Mass Opinion (whose verdicts are as subliterate and ephemeral as the newspapers which embody them) represented still another Trial of a Generation—or, more precisely, of the Intellectuals of a Generation. What was at stake this time, however, was a betrayal not to a foreign power or an outlandish philosophy, but a capitulation to the values of the mass audience itself.

SOMETHING like this, surely, the *T.L.S.* could have found someone to say; but its editors chose instead to begin by keeping the quiz shows a secret and ended by failing to close with another important aspect of the American imagination. What else could they have done, finally, caught as they were in the very same trap in which Van Doren had so telephotogenically squirmed; for they, too,

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HEINEMANN

wanted holily what they wanted highly: an entry into the mass American market, and thus could scarcely afford to be very clear about distinctions between middlebrow compromise and highbrow intransigence. Without such a distinction (in all fairness, it must be said that the article on American music makes an inconclusive gesture in this direction), there can be no sense of the tragi-comic possibilities present in a culture where the best imaginations are always figuring forth the rewards they cannot ever attain. In the end, the *Special Supplement* itself seems yet another symptom of what Europeans are sometimes pleased to call "the Americanisation of culture," but which an embattled American élite prefers to think of as the continuing assault of mass-produced mindlessness. The final effect of the whole issue is not unlike that of a more-than-ordinarily pious number of the *Saturday Evening Post*, with a tidily-cut article on a Great Idea—or a copy of *Life*, with four pages on the Abstract Expressionists squeezed between the usual slick representation of Nothing-Much-At-All.

Certainly, a run-of-the-mill philistine reviewer like Harry Hansen, writing out of a Chicago where no author more consequential than Nelson Algren has been able to remain for nearly twenty years, finds it possible to approve. "A valuable and to some extent eye-opening appraisal," he calls the *Supplement*, rejoicing to find Robert Frost (favourite modern poet of the haters of modern poetry) honoured, and, of course, unappalled at the high esteem granted Salinger (whose speciousness attracts fatally the sentimental undergraduate and the pretentious no-brow, longing for a slick-magazine version of Huck Finn). Mr. Hansen's only real objection is to the "seriousness with which the *Times* describes Leslie Fiedler's 'aggressiveness' and Lionel Trilling's 'cool subversion of the formalist position.' . . ." The reference is, naturally enough, to the article on "the break-through of the Jewish writer," which, standing almost alone in its refusal to be politely superficial, makes Mr. Hansen suspect some insidious boring-from-within. "But that article . . . ," he surmises, "appears to be of New York origin." It was in fact written, I gather, by a young man now in Mr. Hansen's own Chicago, which is almost too pat to be believed; but "New York" is surely for Mr. Hansen not a geographical term but a pejorative, meaning something very like "egg-head." Certainly he does not object to such New Yorkers as Clifton Fadiman, a man squarely on his side, whose credentials include a long-standing distrust of the fiction of William Faulkner and a *vita* which concludes as follows: ". . . master of ceremonies on the popular radio programme *Information Please*, and on

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the television show *This is Show Business*. For some time he has been a member of the editorial board of the Book-of-the-Month Club." Yet it is precisely this native New Yorker who contributes its *leitmotif* to the Special Supplement.

Taurus on the first page, at any rate, chooses to close his keynote column with a reference to his words: "And we believe, as Clifton Fadiman wrote in 1941, that 'it is our duty to keep alive . . . the tone of men who believe in each other, who talk to each other, using words, simple or profound, but words, living speech, the signature of civilization.' . . ." This represents not only the surviving Bloomsbury ideal, but, oddly enough, the faith with which it is strangely blended in the pages of the *T.L.S.*, the creed which kept Charles Van Doren week after week on "Twenty-One." And decoded it reads: "Stay with television, stay with the Book-of-the-Month Club, stay with *Life* and *Time*. Keep the lines of communication open at all costs, and you, too, may end up reading John Donne for five minutes a week on the Dave Garroway programme!"

What the cost of such pseudo-communication is, I am convinced I know, though the *T.L.S.* would have to judge me yet one more victim of the Stevenson Fallacy; it is, quite simply, the loss of joy. The lovely horror and negativism of much high American art, the writers for the *T.L.S.* do not fail to acknowledge; and one has some sense that they perceive the sheer pleasure which certain Americans have found in saying *"No."* What they do not admit is the obverse, which is, the dull air of *acedia* that hangs over the mass pseudo-arts: the apathy with which their messages of affirmation are expressed and received. To be sure, the author of a piece on "Guys in Advertising" is prepared to grant what his fellow-expert on TV tries to conceal: that certain gifted inventors of advertising copy are completely possessed by melancholy. But this he attributes, in his bafflement, to an odd perversity, an unwillingness to see their genius and its products in the blithely condescending mood of the *T.L.S.* "One could wish," he observes in mild reproof, "that those who have the necessary gift . . . were just a little less unhappy about their situation."

Yet this unhappiness is their realest Americanism, the tribute which successful vice pays to unsuccessful virtue (for Americans, this is not hypocrisy, which is a foreign import, but self-hatred) in a country where nothing fails like success.

It is not giving away any secrets, I presume, after the recent orgy of public exposure, to set down a personal experience which has assumed

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MACDONALD

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in my mind the resonance of a parable. Some years ago, I received in the mail a copy of a rather expensive set of books for children which I had not ordered and whose source I could not guess. It was, I suppose, nearly a month later that a letter came from an old friend to whom I had not written in years, saying that he had signed my name to a question he had composed for a radio quiz programme of which he was the producer, because "sometimes we do not have enough questions in the participants' area of competence," and that I had *won* the set of books. I asked him no questions, of course, and he owed me no explanations (though he may have shared with me the memory of the two of us at sixteen, standing side by side and chanting in unison a protest against the conviction of the Scottsboro Boys). Yet he ended his letter, "I am not exactly unhappy, but somehow my life is joyless."

Destroying the Ruins

The Banquet Years. By ROGER SHATTUCK. *Faber.* 36s.

THE title is racy and misleading; the introduction suggests that Mr. Shattuck, of the University of Texas, had one eye on a larger readership than he is likely to get. For this is, after all, a serious, perceptive, and learned investigation into the lives of four interesting men about whom most of us know too little. Mr. Shattuck's subjects are Henri Rousseau, Eric Satie, Alfred Jarry, and Guillaume Apollinaire, and he gives us adequate reason for his choice:

> Only by cutting below the most prominent figures is one likely to find men both representative of their era and significant in their own right. Their artistic identities are most discernible against their background rather than removed from it into a context of individual greatness . . . the entwined careers (of these four) in Paris exactly span the period 1885-1918 and suggest a unity in artistic conviction and practice that is less clearly expressed in any single figure or in a general survey of the era. Chronologically and in spirit they set its limits. In addition, their originality and persistence worked upon more stable artists and obliged them to take into account the most audacious and sometimes foolish aspirations of the age.

This is reasonable enough, though even by Mr. Shattuck's terms of reference we see that Rousseau is an odd-man-out in this company. Surely Marcel Duchamp would have served the book's purposes a good deal better, for what the author is after is conscious iconoclasm, the pursuit of novelty for its own sake and the deliberate cult of the absurd. What he is after is to investigate an artistic period when new visions and new techniques were being sought *at any price*. And what he shows, among many other things, is that the price which the individual artist had to pay was often very heavy indeed. Rousseau certainly paid a price for his integrity, in poverty and ridicule, but there is really nothing to confirm the theory that he was slyly conscious of his rôle behind the mask of innocence. He was a genuine naïve as well as a great artist—which is one of the rarest phenomena in the history of the arts. His friend Jarry, perhaps the most heroically self-conscious writer who ever wrote, is the true representative of the period—or at least of the theme which Mr. Shattuck has chosen for it.

The privilege of reviewing in ENCOUNTER is, I take it, that the donkey-work has already been done by others. I do not intend to summarise the book, or even to criticise it in any detail. It is a book which stimulates us to think beyond it, and that in itself is a cause for gratitude. It must be enough to say here that Mr. Shattuck treats his odd team with respect and sympathy, but without fatuity. He believes that they were doing something important and something which needed to be done. He believes that even their most ludicrous extravagances had a respectable motive and a useful effect. And I agree with him.

In a moment of simple common-sense Jarry's Père Ubu expressed their purpose with excellent clarity:

> Hornsboodle, we should never have knocked down everything if we hadn't meant to destroy the ruins too. But the only way we see of doing that is to put up some handsome buildings.

None of the three—Rousseau *must* be left out—put up any very handsome buildings, though Apollinaire came nearest to positive achievement. The question is, then, what buildings have resulted from their demolitions?

It is a difficult question to answer because effects and influences are always harder to define than critics would like to suppose. If we look at the sequel, and, for convenience only, at France and England, the positive effects of the demolitionists are not at all apparent. Jarry, himself an immediate heir of Rimbaud and Lautréamont, a remote heir of Rabelais, was the spiritual predecessor of Dada and Surrealism. Existentialism and the "Anti-novel" succeeded in their turn, with such unclassifiable but familiar figures as Beckett and Ionesco. Handsome buildings? Neither the individuals nor the movements can be credited with any very obvious examples. One feels that work of demolition has been carried

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on ever since, with decreasing verve, increasing automatism. What does Ionesco offer which Jarry hadn't already done, and done more outrageously? Where can the *"choseisme"* of Robbe-Grillet lead except back to the deliberately inarticulate negations of Dada? What came of "the Absurd" except the ponderous philosophical justification of an attitude which was entirely familiar to Satie, Jarry, and Apollinaire?

But although a superficial glance leads to rather depressing results, and although nothing in the arts is more grotesque than the spectacle of a superannuated avant-garde, the best modern art and writing in France owes a very great deal to the period immediately before 1918. Whatever may be thought of André Gide to-day he was the representative writer of the inter-war years, and his frenetic search for new attitudes and new forms was a direct result of the ferment which writers like Jarry had created. Even Claudel, even Valéry, would not have written or thought as they did without that immediate background of nihilism and iconoclasm. Even writers like Jouhandeau, Montherlant, Jouve, and Malraux have, in their wildly different ways, a post-diluvial air about them; they give their readers the sense much less of continuity than of refreshment and renewal. It goes without saying that none of these writers, not even Gide at his most contorted, wrote in the least *like* Jarry or Apollinaire. But they wrote in the recognition of what their wild predecessors had done—and in the recognition that it couldn't be undone.

As for the visual arts, on which I am little qualified to write, it is a truism that a tradition was broken at the turn of the century and that that breach of tradition has been accepted by every later painter of any value. (As for music, I must leave that to others.)

The English sequel has been very different. But it was not immediately so. What needs to be remembered is that the English contemporaries of Satie, Jarry, and Apollinaire were Elgar and Delius; Sickert, John, and Steer; Hardy, Kipling, Shaw, Wells, and the Georgian poets. It was only near the end of Mr. Shattuck's period that a competent team of sappers—Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and Lewis—began to achieve for us an equivalent breach in our dying tradition. And for two decades all went merrily enough. There was an exhilarating battle throughout the 'twenties and the 'thirties, between the old and avant-gardes; and when official recognition was finally won by Mr. Eliot—in about the year 1939—it seemed as if the battle had been won. Certainly the new poets of the 'thirties owed a definite though indirect and indefinable debt to the original iconoclasts of Paris.

Since then, in outward appearance, there has been an astonishing relapse. To-day we find ourselves living in a time when the novels of C. P. Snow are discussed with the same seriousness as were in the 'twenties and 'thirties those by James Joyce and when there are critics who write that they prefer *The Elder Statesman* to *The Family Reunion*. Mr. Amis dislikes Mrs. Woolf as much as he dislikes Beowulf—and both figures seem, in his mythology, to belong to about the same period. The word "experimental" has become almost a dirty one in the critical vocabulary of bright and youngish men. If the French seem to be atrophied by the almost meaningless repetition of old destructive gestures, we seem to have revolted against the very fact and possibility of artistic revolt.

But even in modern England there is something else to be seen by a closer scrutiny. There is Mr. Robert Graves to be seen, a poet whose stature has only been fully recognised in the last few years, and a poet whose work is quite obviously the fruition of conscious literary iconoclasm. Of course Mr. Graves' poetry has nothing in common with the enormities of Père Ubu; but it stands, a handsome building, somewhere on the ruins which Jarry helped to create. Again, the best of our youngest poets, Mr. Thom Gunn and Mr. Ted Hughes, are certainly not strident experimentalists, but they owe a debt to that

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past which they must surely recognise. Again, and in spite of our contemporary dramatic "realism," the name of Berthold Brecht is beginning to be a magic one among us. And surely this represents some yearning for the pre-Snow era, and the sense that something important was begun then but never finished.

Jarry and Apollinaire were not very important writers, and I gather from Mr. Shattuck's rather reluctant admissions that Satie was not a very important composer. But they all contributed to that violent shifting of gears which enabled greater men to move forward with a new zest into unexplored countries. I do not believe that we need a new crop of demolitionists in England now. But we do need writers who are aware of the breach in their own tradition and who write with a true knowledge of the past. The true traditionalist is the opposite of an archaist.

Philip Toynbee

The Over-sell

Triumph in the West. By ARTHUR BRYANT. *Collins.* 30s.

1960 is as far removed from VE-Day, as 1933 was from Armistice Day. Every aspect of strategy, tactics, and defence policy has been revolutionised by technical developments in these last fifteen years, and we live under a cloud of apprehension that is in some ways as heavy as in the war years themselves. Yet the appetite of the British public for memoirs, novels, films about what is known in official shorthand as *W.W.II.* is apparently insatiable: and this book —the second volume of Sir Arthur Bryant's attempt to write a narrative based on the diaries and notes of Lord Alanbrooke—has already sold some 70,000 copies. The British reading public of the 'thirties did not display this morbid interest in *W.W.I.*, though it involved a much greater clash of personalities. Why do their children hunger so keenly for fresh comment on *W.W.II*? Presumably the answer is contained in the words "Britain's finest hour," not just Churchill-worship but a longing to hear and hear again the details of the last moment in modern history when Britain was an independent Great Power before Americans took over the leadership of the West, and Britain became entangled in a net of alliances as one European power among several.

If one is right in thinking that this continuing interest in the last war is a sublimated form of anti-Americanism, then Sir Arthur Bryant has given the British public what it wants. It is true that, presumably in response to the criticisms of the earlier volume, *The Turn of the Tide*, there is more direct quotation from Alanbrooke and less intervention from his chronicler. But in the introductory chapter by Bryant the dice are loaded against the Americans—Roosevelt, Marshall, and King—and the reader is asked to accept the image of an Alanbrooke, the wisest and most far-seeing strategist on the Western side, having steadily to give ground to less experienced but more powerful figures, Soviet and American.

Now it will be a long time before the historian can make any final verdict as to whether the British were right to demand, and the Americans were wrong to oppose, a more active Mediterranean strategy in 1943–44. What is surely an injustice to Alanbrooke is to pick out in this volume those diary extracts that emphasise his contempt for American strategic planning ("The American Chiefs of Staff have given way to our views a thousand more times than we have given way to them," Dill reminded him from Washington in October 1943) as it was in the earlier volume to highlight those entries that revealed his frequent infuriation with Churchill's leadership. Of the Cairo Conference:

> We were dumbfounded by being informed that the meeting must finish on Sunday at the latest (in forty-eight hours) as the President was off. No apologies—nothing! They have completely upset the whole meeting by wasting all our time with Chiang Kai-shek and Stalin before we had settled any points with them. . . . It looks like some of the worst sharp practice that I have seen for some time.

And the following spring:

> At last all our troubles about *Anvil* are over. We have got the Americans to agree, but have lost the additional landing-craft they were prepared to provide. History will never forgive them for bargaining equipment against strategy and for trying to blackmail us into agreeing with them by holding the pistol of withdrawing craft at our head. . . .

The point is not whether these and other explosions which the book contains are justified: it is that they distort the portrait of the writer without adding to our ability to judge the rights and wrongs of the great Anglo-American controversies, in the way that has been attempted so judiciously in, for instance, Volumes V and VI of the official *Grand Strategy* series by John

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Ehrman (drawing on a much wider range of material).

For in trying to fit the Alanbrooke notes and diaries within what might fairly be called "the *Sunday Times* formula"—namely, of a wise and far-sighted Britain having to yield to amateur American leadership for reasons of honest poverty—Bryant has been guilty of over-selling his man. Whatever the final verdict on the Mediterranean strategy (in which the British were probably wrong), or for the break into Germany after Normandy (in which the British were almost certainly right), there is little in these papers to show that Alanbrooke was a man of great strategic imagination or foresight. He was a patient man, capable of bearing an enormous load—the ideal qualities for a Chief of Staff—and if he had had more dazzling gifts it is doubtful if Churchill would have kept him at his side.

Perhaps his greatest contribution, at any rate in the last year of the war, was to keep the differences of view and temperament between Eisenhower and Montgomery from bursting into open warfare. But he remained in office for a year after the war, and there is little indication that he had any real grasp of the new world that was emerging, strategically from the invention of nuclear weapons, politically from the dissolution of the old British Empire. He was a good plain cook, and to elevate him into an Escoffier is to do an injustice to the man and distort the record. He was a more sheltered figure than Marshall, for he had a political chief who had a greater grasp of strategy (whatever Churchill's eccentricities), and none of Marshall's problem of obtaining Congressional support. The picture that he paints in his own diaries, of a tired Atlas carrying the world on his shoulders, is the inevitable result of keeping a record late at night, and is not necessarily consistent with a more objective assessment of the facts.

What one can legitimately complain of is that Alanbrooke himself—the only senior Anglo-American figure of the last war who has played no public rôle, political, military, or commercial, in the intervening years—should not have addressed himself to personally reducing the wilderness of diaries and notes, which he handed over to Bryant, to a coherent series of judgments. For one thing, he is clearly a good judge of personality and has a nice eye for detail: I have rarely seen the famous story of the *bombe* explosion at Winston's dinner-party for Roosevelt and Stalin at Teheran better told. Part of his strength as C.I.G.S. clearly resided in his deep attachment to the ordinary things of life, but if he had devoted the last decade-and-a half to more important pursuits than becoming the definitive authority on the nesting habits of tomtits, he could have done much to enhance our own comprehension of one of the most difficult periods in our history, in a way that this book does not.

Alastair Buchan

Voltaire and Strong Views

Voltaire's Politics: The Poet as Realist. By PETER GAY. *Princeton University Press. London: Oxford University Press.* 48s.

WE live, so we are frequently told, in an age of anxiety, and certainly in the age of Buchenwald and Hiroshima, of the H-bomb and the danger of universal poisoning, there is lots to be anxious about. But in the preoccupation with *Angst*, with original sin, in the generalised despair that is fashionable, in the nearly universal contempt for utopian views of society or of human nature, there is more than the result of reflection on one of the most barbarous epochs in human history. There is not only what Gilbert Murray called a "failure of nerve," there is a reaction to a great *"trahison des clercs"* and a generalised fear of the letting loose of human passions that we now know or think we know to be incurably murderous. In such a world, a rationalist reformer like Voltaire cannot expect to get a good press. True, the author of *Candide* was no imbecile optimist, but the programme of *"écrasez l'infâme"* seems inadequate, for one type of institutional infamy weakened or destroyed, merely makes room for another. As Christianity declines, new and more savage religions like Nazism appear. *Quieta non movere* is the motto of many once aggressive and hopeful radicals and men look back nostalgically to the days before the ancient verities were questioned.

It is the first of the many merits of this excellent book that its author is not intimidated by the current fashion. He is unashamedly for the Enlightenment. He is for the simple bourgeois reforms that Voltaire advocated, the abolition of torture, of religious persecution, of censorship, of judicial murder, of fanaticism used as an instrument of policy. Without going as far as to assert that Voltaire was always right or was a deeply scrupulous controversialist or always practised what he preached, Dr. Gay asserts and, I think, proves that Voltaire was a "good devil." To do this, Dr. Gay has had to read not only an immense amount of the mass

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of Voltaire's writings, but to study the writings of his contemporaries, friends and enemies, of his commentators and of the numerous polemical writers of the past two centuries who have resisted the power and charm of Voltaire as if it were in fact *"l'infâme."*

It is possible and would certainly be natural if it were so, that the common reader will be surprised at the amount of hostile heat that Voltaire has generated, especially in France. And it is possible that Dr. Gay has devoted too much time to the enemies of Voltaire and to the refutation of not very acute or well-equipped critics. But it is necessary to allow for the heat of the reaction if one is to assess at its true weight the importance of Voltaire.

First of all, Voltaire has been and is one of the great forces that have made modern France. When Pius IX made St. Francis de Sales the patron saint of journalism, French journalists replied to the intrusive Pope by electing Voltaire to that high office. And the spirit of modern France is still deeply marked by Voltaire and the forces he caused to rise up against him. He has marked the French mind—and the French Church in a way that, even to-day, is ignored at the student's peril.

It is because this is so that Voltaire made so many enemies, some of them ex-Voltaireans. And perhaps Dr. Gay might have been wiser to devote some time to a general explanation of why Voltaire has been so often attacked, misrepresented, or written off as a mere scoffer, as the embodiment of the spirit that denies, to be despised equally by the believing Christian and the sophisticated philosopher. It is natural enough for the Germans (Goethe excepted) to write Voltaire off or down. His was a deeply un-Germanic mind and manner. It is easy to see why the more simple-minded French Catholics and conservatives hate him and denigrate him: *"C'est la faute à Rousseau, c'est la faute à Voltaire"* is an adequate enough description of what is wrong with France for many even to-day. It is easy to see why Voltaire was the demon for orthodox divines like Timothy Dwight of Yale.

But there is more to the Voltaire question than that. For some of his enemies have been acute (as was that disagreeable man, Emile Faguet). Some have been wise and generous like Joubert. Some have been impressive doctrinaires like Joseph de Maistre. Some have been enemies of capitalism like Harold Laski for whom bourgeois reforms were of minor importance. Other critics have been confirmed democrats and have seen in Voltaire the friend of enlightened despotism or just of despotism, the pensionary of Frederick the Great, the panegyrist of Catherine the Great. And others have seen in him the typical ideologue dabbling in politics without any real understanding of what makes the political world go round.

To all these schools of critics, Dr. Gay gives an answer and usually a convincing answer. He does not try to defend the indefensible, the dishonest praise of Catherine for instance. And he does not describe a static Voltaire; Voltaire grew and changed and was a more serious citizen of the republic when he came back to Paris than when he left it for Potsdam. But he shows, and, I think, with success, that in his politics, especially in his French politics, Voltaire was rational, sensible, with an adequate *"tacte des choses possibles."* If he was for royal authority, in the France of Louis XV that was better than being for the Church or the Parlements. If Louis XV and Louis XVI deceived the hopes Voltaire put in them, that was painful for Voltaire and a disaster for France. Voltaire's illusion was the necessary illusion of men like Turgot. Because it was an illusion, France was forced to endure the Revolution and to pay a disastrously high price for her escape from the archaic institutions and attitudes that cramped and disgraced her. I think it can be argued that by the time Voltaire really gave himself to politics, the solution preached by Montesquieu was hopelessly

Richard Rovere

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JANUARY ISSUE

We have had many requests for the January issue of ENCOUNTER, which contains the story, 'The Trial Begins', by the young Russian writer Abram Tertz. We regret to say that this issue is now out of print.

This is the fourth issue to sell out in recent months. Although we are now printing over 20,000 copies a month (4,000 more than a year ago), we still find it difficult to keep pace with the demand for ENCOUNTER. Readers are strongly advised to take out a subscription or place a regular order with their newsagent.

out of date simply because Montesquieu's intermediary bodies were hopelessly corrupt and sterile. In the main, Voltaire was right. Perhaps Dr. Gay could have done a little more to stress a lack of candour in much of the propaganda. It was not only by altering details in the case of Elizabeth Canning that Voltaire misrepresented the practical system of English justice. His account of it was hopelessly optimistic and one feels that he must have known better. But he was fighting and had no objection to practising gamesmanship. He fought to win.

But if Dr. Gay's brilliant and most readable polemic is a successful rehabilitation of Voltaire, it is more than that. It is, whether he meant it so or not, a tract for our times. How would a Voltaire fare to-day? If it was wrong of him to shut his eyes to the crimes of Catherine II, what of our free spirits who shut their eyes to the crimes of Stalin? Voltaire's disingenuousness compares very well with the senile credulity of the Webbs and the senile frivolity of Shaw. He would have found it harder to swallow Hungary than some eminent intellectuals did. We have to be selective in our sense of justice to-day, not to have strong views about Nyasaland because that suits Khrushchev, not to have strong views about Hungary because that suits Cardinal Spellman, not to have any views about Spain because views annoy the Pentagon. Maybe Saintsbury was half right and Voltaire *did* pick his victims as part of a campaign against *"l'infâme,"* but then he thought the Church was infamous because it did infamous things. Perhaps we could do to-day with so acute and passionate a preacher of moral platitudes that then—and now—had the air of novelties. Certainly we are in no position to be snooty to the defender of Calas and La Barre—and have less than no reason to be superior to the shallow and innocent age of the Enlightenment. We are certainly in mud and blood deep enough to satisfy the worst smug enemies of Voltaire. So much the worse for us.

D. W. Brogan

Fearful Symmetry

The Ideal City. By HELEN ROSENAU. *Routledge and Kegan Paul.* 30s.

THIS book is an account of man's search for utopia through twenty-five centuries: the perennial wish to find some sort of ideal expression for a lot of people living together. The concept, when found, is apparently never to be used ("appears as a regulative model and an inspiration, rather than as a blueprint to direct

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action") but is to be waved in front of the town planner riding along with his awful un-ideal population as a kind of holy grail. Occasionally the town planner has a few seconds to look at it and the result is something like the rebuilt centre of Plymouth.

On the evidence of this book, which I do not altogether trust, man has made a pretty poor showing for his twenty-five centuries of search. With all the advances in his material condition, his ideal would still seem to be unable to rise above Euclidian geometry and the accompanying reflection that simple uniform geometrical order must reflect divine will. It is as if we were still composing music in nothing but the Grecian modes. One after another, the little geometrical diagrams pop up on the pages—Vitruvius, Filarete, Boullée, Ledoux. These ideal cities became almost a mania in the late 18th century and then found their true destiny in the 1800s—as prisons and workhouses; Miss Rosenau charts the change without seeming to be aware of its implications. The whole corpus is then translated forward, vaguely classicist and vaguely formalist, as a message for our times, expressed explicitly in statements like "a basic human urge is reflected in a desire for symmetry which is based on the human form."

Now this is really not good enough. There is indeed a case for symmetry—though not for universal symmetry—but it cannot be made in one woolly sentence in a book of these pretensions. A question like this ought to have been the heart of the book: why has man continued to play with his compasses when all cities which come nearest to being "ideal"—i.e., those which most excite, or ennoble, or strip naked man's spirit—are in fact something much more subtle and complex? If I want to see the image of a city I would not go to Versailles or Karlsruhe or an American gridiron town, but to Venice or Oxford or Dublin. If it is objected that these are organic accretions of centuries then I would go to Nash's Regent's Park as it was originally laid out—not only the grandiose pattern of terraces which is all that is left now, but the working-class streets and squares behind: "to each according to his needs," but needs provided with more understanding than any totalitarian or lowest-common-denominator egalitarian system could ever muster.

This scheme of Nash's gets one page from Miss Rosenau, much of it uncomprehending of Nash's true purpose ("theatrical character . . . facile brilliance"), and it is this that gives me my doubts about whether the rest of the book is playing fair. Has Miss Rosenau started out with an ideal city of her own, and selected examples to illustrate it? There is no mention of Camillo Sitte, for example, but that is not so serious because we have a fair chance of finding out about him for ourselves. But for earlier times we are at the art historian's mercy. Is there in fact somewhere a vision of what a practical mediæval mason thought of the ideal city—not a cosmologising pedant but someone who actually had to build? Did some 16th-century Italian leave a Mannerist town plan as full of spatial distortions and elisions as a Mannerist façade?

Probably not: I am now leaning as far towards complexity and organic shapes as Miss Rosenau has leaned away from them. Yet I am convinced that the ideas of this whole tribe of ideal city planners are wrong, or, to put it more accurately, inadequate. Symmetry and formality are only part of the story; the other part is the word-picture of the ideal city that might be given by the man in the street when he has enough drink to be unbuttoned: a place to do everything in, to have every kind of diversion within easy reach, and to have a distinctively metropolitan way of doing everything. Multiformity, as opposed to the theorist's uniformity.

Neither is completely right, but the problem is not one versus the other, but a concordance or harmonisation. The ideal city needs both, and London makes the point, for it can exemplify every rule of town design in the book if one looks long enough. The Mall, with Buckingham Palace at one end and the Admiralty Arch at the other, is a perfect formal axis—the right size, the right length, the right symbolic meaning. Off it on one side is the vegetable intricacy of St. James's Park, off it on the other the mineral intricacy of the courts and alleys of St. James's Palace. Together, and only together, they make up a city, one of the most real cities in the world. And here, as in so many other things, the truly real is almost ideal. All the rest is, by comparison, playing with pretty wooden blocks in the kindergarten.

Ian Nairn

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LETTERS

"Beastly to the Germans"

I AM most flattered that Mr. Francis Williams has chosen to say something about this problem of Anglo-German relations. I am even more flattered that he has chosen to say so much. Or should I say —"written so much." For it is questionable whether he has said a great deal.

First, one or two misunderstandings arising out of the cursory, but no doubt utterly polite glance which Mr. Williams gave to my article in the December ENCOUNTER. I did not "fail" to make precise distinctions in that article between the "true functions" of papers like the *Mirror*, and the *Times* or *Guardian*. I never set out to make any such distinctions. In fact, I made only a fleeting allusion to the *Mirror* (and to the *Daily Express*, which Mr. Williams has apparently taken under his wing) in an article which ran to 4,000 words. I did not intend to traduce these two excellent papers. With the *Daily Mirror* I always read the pictures, and glance at the news. With the *Daily Express*, I have indeed followed Mr. Williams' precepts—in short, to be suspicious about that paper's views on any serious subject.

A second misunderstanding. Mr. Williams urges the British and Germans to "stick to such practical arrangements as are necessary between us, and keep emotion out of it." In the 4,000 words which I wrote for ENCOUNTER, "emotion" was given no place at all. My idea was to analyse a problem, not to emotionalise it. But it is Mr. Williams who has chosen to write, and at very great length, about "the emotions of ordinary people" and "the business of mass circulation newspapers like the *Daily Mirror* to reflect these emotions." He has explained that the *Mirror* is not really concerned at all with "informing and persuading public opinion." In his own words—"it is concerned with expressing the emotions of its readers." I grant Mr. Williams that —readily. But that was not the purpose of the article which I wrote for ENCOUNTER. I honestly believe that the object in writing, at all, is to express an opinion of one's own.

A third misunderstanding. Mr. Williams writes about the "posh" papers "making the right sort of noises (that is what they are for)" when ex-President Heuss visited Britain two years ago. But Mr. Williams, in this same article for you, Sir, has described these same papers as "conscious instruments of that formative and interpretive power which is one of the classic functions of the serious opinion press." Might I suggest that the "posh papers" (a foolish expression, but Mr. Williams' own) try to make the "right sort of noises" about German history in general? Better, perhaps, than the obscene and frantic bray of Nero's fiddle.

A final misunderstanding. Mr. Williams writes that it is "a pity that a lot of *Mirror* readers still feel as they do about Germany." Do they? Does Mr. Williams honestly know? Personally, I believe that a great many Englishmen have genuine and important doubts about the German people. And I believe that these doubts are justified. But I do not believe that they have anything in common with the witches' brew of spite, untruth, and prejudice which is served up to a large section of the British public as a "true picture" of the Germany of to-day.

Mr. Williams writes continuously about "Germans" as if they were some species of rabbit. I believe Mr. Williams is a Socialist—and I would not take issue with him about that. But I would ask—in all seriousness—what Socialist Internationals are about, when a British Socialist simply condemns all Germans indiscriminately? What of the German Trade Unions? What of the Social Democratic Party? What, in heaven's name, what about the average German worker? Is Mr. Williams so fatuously misinformed that he believes that the average Ruhr coalminer is someone who merits his highly emotional brand of hatred? For the Ruhr coalminer is a very ordinary sort of chap. Colonel Blimp, it seems, has left Cheltenham for good—and changed his politics. If he is to be found at all to-day, then one must look for him among Mr. Williams' friends—among all those who would, as readily as he, make wogs and SPADES out of our *Nato* allies. Let the problem of Anglo-German relations be settled by people who —think.

TERENCE PRITTIE

Bonn

I have a great respect for Mr. Francis Williams as an observer and chronicler of the British Press, and no doubt it is valuable that he should tell your German readers that the *Daily Mirror* reflects popular emotions and does not form opinion while the *Daily Express* reflects only the private prejudices of Lord Beaverbrook. All this is presumably quite well known to your British readers but it is a contribution to that "understanding" of the British scene which Mr. Williams affects to despise. So is the distinction which he draws between the functions of the quality and the popular Press.

So long as he sticks to what he knows about, and this includes his own emotions, Mr. Williams is on sure ground; but when he talks about "the reflection of the German character shown in the . . . servile acceptance of every whim of this old man" (Dr. Adenauer) he shows a misunderstanding of the German Press that springs from ignorance (which he says he does not mind), and he is unfair.

The Anglo-German editors' meeting, which we organised in London in November and which coincided with Dr. Adenauer's London visit, showed that a great many editors have *not* followed the Adenauer line on Britain (and this irrespective of whether their papers support the CDU, SPD, or are independent). It also showed that the better German papers on the whole have not reacted very sharply to some of the bitter things said about Germany in some parts of the British Press.

It may be a wise counsel to "leave Anglo-German relations alone" but the forty-eight editors and correspondents who came to our meeting thought

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it worth while to try to find out some of the causes of misunderstanding and to discuss what they in their professional capacity might do to improve the mutual reporting of the two countries.

E. J. B. Rose
Director, International Press Institute

Zurich

J. Middleton Murry

It seems strange that Mr. Hilary Corke should have taken seven columns of the January Encounter to discuss such a "pointless booby" as my husband. He has dabbled gleefully in Mr. Lea's book and pulled out just what he wanted; yet I have a shrewd suspicion that the names John Middleton Murry, D. H. Lawrence, and Katherine Mansfield will long outlive that of Mr. Corke. The jeering "clever-clever" words are too superficial to hurt, but as a protest against this deplorable treatment of a serious subject, I should be grateful if you would delete my name from the list of your subscribers.

Mary Middleton Murry

Lower Lodge,
Thelnetham, Diss,
Norfolk

[We are very sorry that Mr. Hilary Corke's article should have caused Mrs. Murry pain, although we quite understand why it should have done so. The editors have really to choose between private feelings and the reasonable interest of readers in a subject. We feel that Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, and their circle rather went out of their way to make their private affairs and interests, their personal agonisings, matters of general discussion. If our contributors wish to comment on this, we do not feel that we should stop the discussion at this stage, on account of the hurt sensibilities of their relatives. We do not think that Mrs. Murry would deny that her husband brought his private affairs into the open, nor that he himself was the first to discuss them. In doing so, he himself may have caused pain to some of those near to him. We think it would be wrong to blame other critics who have pursued private affairs which he himself made public.—Eds.]

I never knew D. H. Lawrence or Katherine Mansfield, but I doubt if they were *quite* so nasty as Mr. Hilary Corke says he thinks they were, in his humorous (and Seymourous*) review of F. A. Lea's *Life* of Middleton Murry [Encounter, January]. I did know Murry, however, and I can assure Mr. Corke that he was not *quite* such a nice put-upon little cherub. I don't know Mr. Corke himself, of course, and perhaps *he* is very nice. He must be really, with his tirra-lirra down the lane. But I do know a number of writers, and, really, a good many of them are rather tiresome chaps. The point about them, though, is that some of them write well and others don't. It so happens that Murry often—not always, of course, but often—wrote very well indeed; and there is no evidence in Mr. Corke's review that he has read anything of Murry's except what was "served up" to him by that oily schoolmaster who was fond of stroking and bending little boys' souls, and Mr. Lea's quotations, and finally, of all things, a book of sermons. On the other hand—but it's a dreadful thought—perhaps he has read some more and not quite managed to understand it. His free and easy way of putting reason and feeling in their place does rather seem to suggest this.

Richard Rees

London

[Hilary Corke writes: *I am sorry, and surprised, to hear that I was too nice to Murry. I agree that he sometimes wrote "well," but that is only true of the two essential qualifications of the* critic. *The other is that he should be able to perceive the object before him, so that he can write about what he is writing about. Murry appears to me to write not about Keats, say, but about Murry's ideas about Keats, which are at some remove from the object. I believe I need not trouble to produce evidence either of reading or of understanding: but Salinger, oddly enough, I happen never to have read more than a dozen words of. I am given to suppose, however, that he would not prove a very appropriate model for myself should I chance to need one.*]

The Anglo-Jewish Writer

Mr. Brian Glanville is too pessimistic about Anglo-Jewish writers [Encounter, February] and altogether too respectful of book-reviewers' ratings. If the five-and-a-quarter million Jews of America have produced an astonishing crop of writers and poets, the less than half-a-million Jews of the British Isles haven't done too badly either, even if one picks names at random, employing the same vague biological definition implicit in his own comments. No major literary figures, perhaps, but a fair crop of talent, and, barring the accident of genius, what more can one expect of a small minority group which totals half the population of Birmingham?

Most of the contemporary Jewish writers in England have come forward since the end of the war and are two generations removed from Eastern Europe. They are only one generation removed from poverty and the ghettoes of London and Manchester. The result is that only now are they beginning to find a place in the stratification of English culture and sufficient education and leisure to nourish their talents. The social protest, anti-sweat shop writing that came from the East End in the 'thirties could have little more than documentary value when the young Jewish writers of the time were starved of education and compelled to work long hours to make a bare living. The emergence of a large Jewish middle class has changed all that, and I would suggest that to dismiss the Anglo-Jewish cultural potential without giving it time to mature is merely impulsive.

* Seymour, of course, was *nice*; but I don't think Mr J. D. Salinger's latest style is a very good model for a reviewer.

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It is true enough that in England Jewish writers often avoid writing about Jews, partly through fear of parochialism and of being "alien," partly because they are over-reacting to the claustrophobia of the ghetto, and partly because many of them are ashamed of their parents. This last is not an exclusively Jewish neurosis; one sees an identical reaction in the provincial English intellectual whose proletarian origins evoke in him a similar aggressive discomfort as, for example, in *Look Back in Anger* and *Room at the Top*. But the latest generation of young Jews seems to be pulled by the return swing of the pendulum. I can think of Dannie Abse's lyrical evocation of a Welsh-Jewish childhood in *Ash on a Young Man's Sleeve*, the poetry of Silkin with its exploration of the Jewish predicament, the Jewish folk humour of Mankowitz, Bernard Kops' *Hamlet of Stepney Green*, and Arnold Wesker's *Chicken Soup with Barley*. I don't suppose official Anglo-Jewry which, like any other organised group, approves only of literature when it confirms its own prejudices, will derive much satisfaction from the brief catalogue listed above, but it is sufficient to indicate that a few coals were deposited in the grate long after Israel Zangwill lit a flame or two with his *Children of the Ghetto*.

Jews have an historical duality due to the fact that they are, as Professor Hyman Levy has aptly said, an internationally distributed people. In this respect they are more vulnerable than most to the effects of events occurring outside the countries of which they are nationals. When the beard of a Jew is pulled in Poland or Germany the pain is felt in Golders Green. It would appear to me, therefore, that the Jewish writer has a potentially richer, more tragic, material in which to exercise his talents. Assimilation may have curtailed his cultural plurality but it has not unravelled the complexity

Anger

A STORY *published in the current issue of* ENCOUNTER, *called "The Trial Begins," is by a young Soviet writer using the pseudonym Abram Tertz. It was smuggled out of Russia, where it could not be published as it stands. It is presented by* ENCOUNTER *as a revelation and a portent: first of all as a behind-the-scenes glimpse of high life among the privileged Soviet élite, then as an illustration of the remarkable things young Russia is thinking behind the veil of censorship.*

It does not strike me as a very good story. Abram Tertz is certainly a born writer (which is not to say that he is a good one), but the quality of his mind is second-rate. What interests me is the reaction of Englishmen who have read this story. They are, as often as not, open-mouthed with amazement: the very idea that any product of Soviet society could write, or think, like that about life in general and Soviet life in particular, could express such bitterness and cynicism, could savage Marx and Lenin, could flavour sex with pornography, could guy the political police, seems never to have crossed their minds.

From this one concludes that all the talk and writing about the angry young men of the Soviet Union, about the stilyagi *and the teddy-boys, about the rebellious young writers, about the plushy vulgarity of the privileged élite, has failed to penetrate.*

It is not even as though the only witnesses to these manifestations had been foreigners. Certainly this uncensored effusion of Abram Tertz's is the most direct and uninhibited expression of generalised dissatisfaction with the system that has ever appeared in English, and it is thus valuable as documentary confirmation of trends clearly visible in many published works. It should be read but only as confirmation.

Further, far deeper indictments of the system—minus the pornography and the bully-ragging of the leadership—have already been published in Moscow—still more in the provinces, which kept up the spirit of the 1956 revolt long after the Muscovites and Leningraders had been damped down. There is more basic criticism of the system in a single poem of Yevtushenko's, for example, than in all Mr. Tertz's rather pretentious posturing. And the daily thoughts of tens of thousands of young Russians who are not professional writers are wild with the perversely complex cynicism of Mr. Tertz. . . .

What did strike me about "The Trial Begins . . ." and what has struck me since in the glimpsed thoughts and oblique utterances of so many Russians who know all about the peculiar shortcomings of the Soviet system and the Russian nature: a kind of savage glorying in the sheer weight of iniquity.

Mr. P. of Archangel, chipping away at the ice under armed guard in 70 degrees of frost, was positively proud to belong to a country which could treat him and anybody else like that. And, to me, Mr. Tertz, exposing corruption and time-serving, bullying, and the more extravagant grotesqueries of the political police—conveys something of the same mood. It is the old, old illusion: nobody can be so bad as we Russians—therefore nobody can be so good. Echoes of Herzen—echoes of Alexander Blok and his Scythians, who blight the world to save it and purify it. It is the kind of thing that makes all reasonable (by Western standards) calculations about the way the Russians are moving so difficult to base.

EDWARD CRANKSHAW in THE OBSERVER (Jan. 10)

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of his situation. In European mythology, he is related to the Eternal Outsider, Judas Iscariot, the Wandering Jew. He has survived the concentration camps only by the accident of geography. The creation of the State of Israel, an apocalyptic historical event by any standards, has added further emotional and sociological complications to his existence.

So Mr. Glanville is right to regard it as a misfortune when Jewish writers cut themselves off from their own material. When they do so they do not merely turn their backs on the community, they perform the perverse if athletic feat of turning their backs on themselves.

EMANUEL LITVINOFF

London

"B.B." and Berenson

As YOU found space for two memoirs of Bernard Berenson [ENCOUNTER, January], couldn't one of these have been devoted to Berenson the great writer on art, and not both to "B.B.," an old man who "uses his sensitive hands to stroke his face in mock anguish when subjects like psycho-analysis crop up; when talking to a woman he likes to hold her hand or stroke her hair"? Perhaps "B.B." deserves to be written about by one lady who doesn't know the difference between High Renaissance and late Renaissance, and for whose sake a famous line must now thus be revised:

> *In the room the women come and go*
> *Talking of Angelo. . . .*

and another lady who believes that art to-day is dominated by "people who spilt paint on the floor, bicycled over it, and then sold the mess for a few hundred pounds," and an "army of painters who work with rulers, compasses, and set-squares. . . ." Perhaps "B.B." asked for it. But, after all, there was Berenson.

DAVID SYLVESTER

London

Mood

IT HAS *been obvious for some time that beneath the granite surface which is all that the outside world ever sees of the Soviet Union there is a highly complex and turbulent society—parts of which are as "cosmopolitan" as Monte Carlo and as "decadent" as Greenwich Village. But for obvious reasons the Russia that listens to jazz, reads Kafka, and is willing to discuss Freud is the hardest Russia of all for a Westerner to get to know. Now the January* ENCOUNTER *has published a brilliant short story by an author from that Russia, writing under the name of Abram Tertz. It is implicitly hostile to the Soviet régime, but in a subtle and unsuspected way. The most striking thing about "The Trial Begins . . ." is perhaps its literary form; it has about as much in common with the arid canons of Socialist realism as James Joyce has with Mr. Howard Spring. It is complex, subtle, clever; and it delights in the most unsocialist way in its own cleverness. Altogether it is removed from the bathetic simplicities of the Zhdanov era by a whole world of sophistication and disillusionment. But it would be wrong to see in Mr. Tertz a Soviet equivalent of the Angry Young Man. Here is no populistic indignation against the injustices of Soviet society; there is no proletarian chip on this sensitive shoulder. It would be equally wrong to see him as a second edition of Mr. Pasternak. For Mr. Pasternak, in spite of his "advanced" style, is really a magnificent survival of the buried Europe which came to maturity before 1914: Mr. Tertz belongs completely to the 1950s.*

His assumptions seem profoundly pessimistic; and his criticisms are thoroughly negative, even despairing. His world is the world of Soviet Top People—the privileged élite who can afford to employ domestic servants, go to beauty parlours, and give tips to cloakroom attendants. His observation of it has little trace of outraged social conscience —although he is revolted by its intellectual and political hypocrisy. At times it is almost snobbish—with echoes of the tart malice of Mr. Evelyn Waugh. One feels that he despises his crude, stupid hero—a public prosecutor—for his vulgarity as much as his politics. This world disgusts him, with its lies and its artificial emptiness—but at the same time he takes it for granted. The background of privileged good living is described with no sense of shock; it is simply accepted. It is the same with the régime. It is cruel, tyrannical, and deceitful—and he hates and despises it. But the schoolboy Seryozha who tries feebly to form a secret society to change it for the better is described, though tenderly, with pitying condescension. Seryozha's trouble was that he took Communism seriously; he thought that cooks should be paid as much as commissars, and that the State should wither away. He—and his bespectacled girl-friend—are on the whole slightly ridiculous figures; far more attractive than the party functionaries, but equally absurd. The mood, in short, is what one might expect from young people in a society which has been endlessly bullied and harried and exhorted for forty years: slogans, all slogans, ring hollow; causes, all causes, seem phoney; what is wanted, most of all, is simply peace and quiet.

EDITORIAL IN THE GUARDIAN (Dec. 30)

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AUTHORS

C. A. R. Crosland was returned to Parliament in the last British election, as Labour M.P. for Grimsby. His well-known book on *The Future of Socialism* has become a centre of controversy in the raging discussions on "the future of Labour," and one spokesman of the Left-wing (Ian Mikardo) polished up an old Leninist cliché to get this off: "What Crosland is trying to do is to make people's mouth water at the prospect of an omelette without jangling their nerves with the sound of broken egg-shells. . . ." Some of Mr. Crosland's (off-the-record) remarks at an international Socialist conference made their way into the press recently, but this is his first article since the "great debate" on the British Left erupted last winter.

Michael Polanyi, who is now a senior research fellow at Merton College, Oxford (until his recent retirement, he held chairs in both the natural and the social sciences at Manchester University), is preparing an "international seminar" for the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Berlin. It will meet in June, and his article in this number constitutes one of the "basic discussion papers." It was recently given as the Arthur Eddington Memorial Lecture, and is being published as a pamphlet by the Cambridge University Press.

TEMPO PRESENTE

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TEMPO PRESENTE è una rivista internazionale di informazione e discussione fondata sul principio della libertà di critica. Essa intende promuovere il riesame dei modi di pensare correnti mettendoli a confronto con la realtà del mondo attuale.

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Reynolds Price is a young American writer who lives in North Carolina. His first published story, "A Chain of Love," appeared in the March, 1958, number of ENCOUNTER. A collection of his short stories, under the title "A Long and Happy Life," will be brought out by Chatto & Windus some time this year.

Nicola Chiaromonte edits, with Ignazio Silone, the Italian review *Tempo Presente*, and writes regularly for Roman papers on film and theatre. . . . **Guy Wint,** who is a Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford, has just published *Common Sense About China* (Gollancz). . . . **Andrew Boyd** is on the editorial staff of *The Economist*. We published his "Moscow Diary" in our June number last year. . . . **F. R. Allemann** is a Swiss correspondent in Bonn, author of recent books on Germany and on the Middle East, and is moving shortly to Berlin to become one of the editors of *Der Monat*. . . . **Leslie Fiedler** is one of the best-known American literary critics and a frequent contributor to these pages ("Walt Whitman," Jan., '55; "The Middle Against Both Ends," Aug., '55; "From Clarissa to Temple Drake," March, '57; "The Un-Angry Young Men," Jan., '58). . . .

Noel Annan's lecture in London on *The Curious Strength of Positivism in English Political Thought,* to which we referred in this space last month (and which we hoped would be "more widely discussed"), was not—as we are sure most alert and sensitive ENCOUNTER readers suspected—a "very conventional" but "a very unconventional performance." We offer our apologies to Professor Annan for this quite unintentional archness. We regrett all typograficil erors, but proof-reading is one of the many lost arts of our age, and when we think of all the disastrous permutations and combinations any printed page of this journal could produce (any twist in a line or paragraph might issue in bans by the Lord Chamberlain, revocation of U.S. second-class mailing privileges, student riots in India, or an off-the-record ultimatum from Mr. Khrushchev), we are sometimes grateful that we manage as well as we do: at least we appear, black on white, and from left to right. . . .

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ANDRE GIDE

Pretexts— Reflections on Literature and Morality

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Until now Gide's literary criticism has been little represented in English translations. This new collection includes the *Réflexions sur quelques points de littérature et de morale* (1887), *Prétextes* and *Incidences*. Here is his famous *Ten French Novels*, and essays on a wide range of subjects from mythology to Dada. Gide, who never tired of quoting Oscar Wilde's paradox that "the imagination imitates, whereas the critical spirit creates", would have liked Camus's remark that "When Gide criticises, he creates". *March 10th. 35s.*

KINGSLEY MARTIN

Critic's London Diary

For many years readers of the *New Statesman* have united in praise of the feature called London Diary. Now at last that feature's chief architect, Mr. Kingsley Martin, has made a selection from his column for publication in book form. The result, which also includes cartoons by Low and Vicky, is a superb commentary on the world we have lived in for the past thirty years. *March 24th. 30s.*

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

The Masks of God

In the seventy years since Frazer published *The Golden Bough* many new perspectives in the study of myth and primitive religions have been opened by archaeological discoveries, by the results of anthropological studies, by research into animal behaviour and by psychological theory. Drawing widely on this new material, Joseph Campbell has produced a study of the origins, history and function of myth (and its attendant, ritual) which is undoubtedly a landmark in its field. *March 24th. 35s.*

SECKER AND WARBURG

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